

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM
PROGRAMMES IN KENYA

BY

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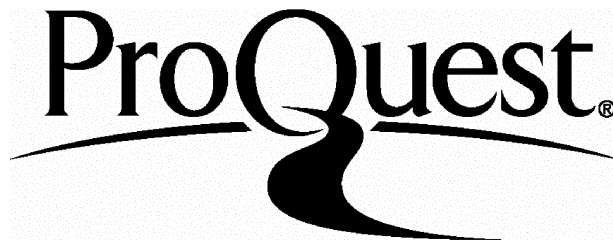
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To my parents Dickson Wamukoya and Merab Makokha for their love for me and for their strong faith in the power of knowledge

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ABSTRACT

The study is a critical examination of the relationship between records management and the administrative reform programme being implemented by the Kenya Government. It examines current policies, procedures, techniques as well as the attitude adopted by various agencies in the public service in the management of records. It also examines the facilities and resources made available by the Government to promote the management of records required for efficient and effective policy development and decision making in the public service.

The study argues that accurate and reliable information provides the foundation for accountability in the public service and is the basis of good government and development. Therefore, the Kenya Government must urgently formulate a records management policy and develop a comprehensive records management programme in the public service not only to facilitate the realisation of these basic goals but also as a contribution towards the aims and objectives of the structural adjustment and administrative reform programmes. Three case studies focusing on the Directorate of Personnel Management, the Civil Service Reform Secretariat and the Ministry of Finance are included and demonstrate the significance of records management in underpinning policy development, decision making and accountability in the public service. The study advocates the adoption of records management as a major component of administrative reform in Kenya as well as in other developing countries.

The study calls for closer cooperation and collaboration

between the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service and the Directorate of Personnel Management in the development of policies and procedures aimed at promoting the efficient and effective management of records in the public service. It also advocates a change in attitude towards records management among senior officials in the public service. Finally, the study calls for proper planning and wider consultation with regard to the introduction and use of computer technology in the public service. In many developing countries, computerised information systems are being introduced without considering the need for linking these with paper-based information systems.

To achieve the study objectives a variety of research methods were used. They included a detailed review and examination of literature, questionnaires and interviews.

The study is divided into three main parts comprising nine chapters. Part one sets the scene by presenting a broad overview of records management and administrative reforms in a global context. Part two focuses on the situation in Kenya, first, by providing an overview of the administrative reform programme and, second, by examining the state of records management in the public service. Part three is concerned with finding solutions and evolving implementation strategies to the problems identified throughout the study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The study examines the relationship between records management and administrative reform programmes within the context of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in Kenya. This is the first time that such an approach has been taken, seeking to link records management to development issues in any developing country. The study should therefore contribute a new perspective to the fields of development administration and development economics as well as to the literature on records management.

The term structural adjustment derives from the concept of "structural transformation", which for many years has been associated with development economics. Spooner and Smith,¹ political economists at the University of Glasgow, allude to the fact that in the 1980s, the concept has come to acquire a new specific meaning relating to the current dialogue on economic policy reform in developing countries. They observe that "structural adjustment programmes are concerned with the structural transformation of a primarily agriculturally based economy to one in which industry accounts for a much larger share

¹Spooner, N J and Smith, L D. Structural Adjustment Policy Sequencing in sub-Saharan Africa, Rome: FAO Economic and Social Development Paper 104, 1991, p 1

of the GDP".²

J P Gittinger³ brings a new dimension to the concept by pointing out that in the development jargon, structural adjustment now refers to a particular set of adjustments undertaken by many governments in response to the debt crisis of the 1980s. He notes that structural adjustment programmes are about issues of macro-economic adjustment.

The use of the term administrative reform like structural adjustment goes back a long time. As early as the 1960s, Parker and Subramaniam⁴ regarded it as being an essential element in building and sustaining institutional capacity. In 1971, a United Nations conference defined it as:

Specially designed efforts to induce fundamental changes in the public administration systems through system-wide reforms or at least through measures for improvement of one or more of its key elements such as administrative structures, personnel and processes.⁵

In a recent study Caiden defines it as "induced systematic

²ibid. p 1

³Quoted in N J Spooner and L D Smith. *ibid.* p 1

⁴Quoted in B C Smith (ed.). The Changing Role of Government: Management of Social and Economic Activities. Proceedings of a Commonwealth Roundtable Conference, London, 4-7 June 1991, p 202

⁵Aide Memoir of the United Nations Inter-Regional Seminar on Major Administrative Reforms in Developing Countries, 25 October-2 November, 1971

improvement of public sector operational performance".⁶ Meanwhile, international organizations such as the United Nations have tended to regard it as having a positive impact on socio-economic development. It was on this basis that when the United Nations launched the crusade on human development during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it repeatedly stressed the need for efficient and effective systems of public administration as the basis for social and economic development in developing countries.

Contemporary development literature on developing countries describes the 1980s and 1990s as the period of economic crisis for most of sub-Saharan African countries. During this period, African countries have experienced economic hardships of a magnitude that precipitated the imposition of structural adjustment programmes by the donor community. These have had a significant impact on the social, economic and political conditions of most African countries.

Sub-Saharan African countries have expressed concern not only about the implementation strategies of SAPs but also their short-term and long-term impact on development. They have expressed disappointment that there has not been a clear policy framework outlining the nature of the reforms demanded by each individual donor agency and that this has allowed the rules to change whenever it suited the donor.

⁶Caiden, G E. Administrative Reform Comes of Age, Berlin: Walter de Ruyter, 1991, p 1

Despite the wrangling over the overall aims and objectives of the reform programmes, donor agencies have increasingly demanded that African countries implement various macro-economic and administrative reforms designed to promote efficient and effective management systems in the public sector. They have also urged the countries to promote transparency, accountability and good government.

The term development administration has several definitions as explained in chapter three. However, in the context of this study, it is interpreted to mean the provision of good government and the efficient organisation and management of administrative activities to facilitate development goals. Good government refers to the manner in which power is exercised in the management and utilisation of a country's economic and social resources for development.⁷ It also implies "accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law".⁸ It means that there is "a high level of organisational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare".⁹ It is the World Bank's view that good government and sound economic management cannot be separated.

⁷The World Bank. Governance and Development, Washington DC: The World Bank, 1992, p 1

⁸Healey, John and Robinson, Mark. Democracy, Governance and Economic Policy: Sub-Saharan Africa in Comparative Perspective, London: Overseas Development Institute, Regent's College, 1992, p 164

⁹ibid. p 164

Meanwhile, according to John Healey and Mark Robinson, the term accountability also has several meanings. Firstly, it means the sharing of the control and purposes of political power, implying a relation of reciprocity between the rulers and the ruled.¹⁰ Secondly, it recognises the existence of constitutional devices to ensure that those in power are held accountable for their actions.¹¹ Thirdly, it implies the ability of interest groups and associations within civil society to curb the hegemony (political domination) of the state. Accountability is among the most important pillars of good government.¹²

Openness implies that "policies are generally subject to prior consultation and public discussion and that there is a legally enforceable right of public access to government records (ie freedom of information), the publicising of government functions and the right of the public to attend meetings of various government bodies".¹³ Transparency implies that "government procedures are widely understood and decisions concerning the use of public resources are subject to scrutiny".¹⁴

Two other concepts, efficiency and effectiveness, are repeatedly used throughout this study. David Osborne and Ted

¹⁰ibid. p 160

¹¹ibid. p 160

¹²ibid. p 160

¹³ibid. p 164

¹⁴ibid. p 164

Gaebler, well-known authors on the subject "renewing government", define the term efficiency as a measure of the cost of each unit of output or productivity and effectiveness as a measure of the quality of productivity.¹⁵

Measuring effectiveness helps an organisation to determine whether its investment is worthwhile or its objectives are being successfully met. In today's business environment, both public and private sector organisations must strive not only to be efficient but also effective as a way of remaining competitive. Too often, public sector organisations tend to be concerned about their efficiency but not their effectiveness. Yet, as Osborne and Gaebler point out, "the public certainly wants efficient government, but effective government even more".¹⁶

What about the definition of records management? Various attempts have been made to define records management. Standard definitions include those by Benedon,¹⁷ Emmerson,¹⁸ Cook¹⁹ and

¹⁵Osborne, D and Gaebler, T. Re-inventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, Massachusetts: Adison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1992, p 351

¹⁶ibid. p 353

¹⁷Benedon, W. Records Management, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1969, p 258

¹⁸Emmerson, P. How To Manage Your Records, Cambridge: ICOSA Publishing, 1977, p 25

¹⁹Cook, M. Archives Administration, London: Dawson Publishing, 1977, p 25

Frank B Evans et al.²⁰ With a great deal of research going on in developed countries to address new concerns in records and information management, the list is bound to grow. Among the issues receiving considerable attention at the moment are those relating to electronic record keeping and information resource management. In recognition of these new trends, records management is defined in this study as encompassing: the policies, systems and both the professional and management techniques systematically applied to the control of recorded information to enhance an organisation's efficiency and effectiveness, while at the same time consolidating its evidentiary base.

In Africa, records management is a relatively new subject of systematic study. No serious research has yet been conducted to address problems of poor record keeping and how they affect accountability, transparency and organisational efficiency, although studies along these lines began to emerge in developed countries several years ago. The growing number of Canadian and Australian case studies are of particular relevance.²¹

In particular, no research has been undertaken focusing on the linkage between records management and development

²⁰Evans, F B et al. "A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators and Records Managers", The American Archivist, 37, 1974, pp 415-433

²¹For case studies see McKemmish, S and Upward, F (eds.). Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping, Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1993, pp i-vi + 247. See also a series of publications by the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

administration. This study is the first such attempt to carry out systematic research into how records management could be linked to the on-going process of reform to enhance public accountability, good governance, efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. It explores these relationships in Kenya.

1.2 Purpose and origin of the study

In November 1991, a Consultative Group Meeting between the Government of Kenya (GOK) and donors in Paris ended in deadlock, with the latter declining to make new aid pledges and citing the rapidly deteriorating political and economic environment in the country. The donors specifically cited issues related to governance, human rights, corruption, accountability and transparency. Consequently, balance of payments support was withheld, forcing the Government to accede to the implementation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored macro-economic and administrative reform programmes, collectively referred to as SAPs.

In view of the social and economic difficulties caused by the withholding of aid, the Government of Kenya formally endorsed the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) in August 1993.²² It outlined the following as the programme's main objectives:

²²Ongwae, J E O. "Rationale for Civil Service Reform in Kenya". Unpublished paper presented at a Workshop on Institutional Development and Civil Service Project, Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya, 15-16 March, 1995, p 12

- reduction of the government budget deficit,
- increase of civil service efficiency and productivity,
- evaluation and rationalisation of government functions and organisational structures,
- adoption of modern management practices.

In spite of the Government's admission in 1992 that its management information system was deficient, neither records nor information management were featured as components of the administrative reform programme. Yet, as long ago as 1978, Michael Cook,²³ Archivist and Lecturer at the University of Liverpool observed that an inadequate records management system was a liability to an organisation as it inhibited its ability to plan effectively or make informed decisions. This fundamental issue had still not found its way into development administration. This could have serious consequences for the Kenya Government in terms of meeting the programme objectives.

The study argues that the public service, being the largest creator of public records in the country, ought to manage its records efficiently and effectively as these records document the various functions, activities and transactions in its dealings with the people or with other organisations. The purpose of the study is, therefore, to examine and to illustrate, through specific examples, the consequences of not incorporating records

²³Cook, M. "This is Records Management", Records Management II. Proceedings of a one-day Conference at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, organised by the Records Management Group of the Society of Archivists, 1978, p 7

management in the administrative reform programme currently being implemented by the Government. It demonstrates the necessity of including records management as a core component and a cornerstone of the reform programme.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The study critically examines the significance of records management in the public sector in Kenya. It explores the contribution records management can make in terms of the organisation of information as a strategic resource. It focuses on three agencies which are key players in the implementation of the administrative reform programme in Kenya, namely: the Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President (referred to as the DPM), the Ministry of Finance (referred to as the Treasury) and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat (referred to as the Secretariat). The study argues that since these agencies play a fundamental role in developing various government policies, including those on the reform process, they require effective records management systems to ensure that the information they require is made available and that it is reliable and authentic.

The communication structures and the nature of information flow in the three agencies are examined, and an attempt is made to define an effective programme for information collection, processing, communication, utilisation and disposition. The study argues further that records and information control is a critical

factor in ensuring service delivery, public accountability, transparency and good government.

The study thus has two main objectives:

- to establish a link between an effective records management programme and the administrative reform programme in the public service in Kenya,
- to demonstrate, by means of specific examples, the potential contribution of records management in meeting the objectives of administrative reform.

1.4 Limitations

Government bureaucratic controls proved a major hindrance to the study. Not only was it difficult for the author to get access to as many officials as he would have wished to interview, accessibility of government documents and reports especially those on civil service reform proved almost impossible. The study found that too many government documents were marked "confidential", unnecessarily restricting the flow of information to the public. Despite the difficulties, the author succeeded in obtaining some of the reports, courtesy of some of the respondents in donor agencies.

Time was another significant limitation. The author had only six months to carry out the field study instead of the usual nine to twelve months often allowed for this kind of study. The period

was too short given that the first three months were spent going through the rigmarole of obtaining research funding from the University. There is need for the authorities to make the process simpler and convenient for everybody. This will encourage research and enhance academic standards.

1.5 Significance of the study

Firstly, the study should create awareness among senior managers in the public service about the importance of managing and utilising information as a resource. Secondly, this is probably the first scholarly research to be conducted on records management in Africa within the context of the present dialogue on governance and development in developing countries.

More significantly, it is expected that the study will enhance collaboration between professionals and administrators and will contribute to the establishment of more effective alliances between archival institutions and government agencies in Kenya as well as in other developing countries. This kind of collaboration will enable archivists and records managers to gain access to financial and other resources they require to do their work. Likewise, by putting into practice professional advice given by archivists and records managers on sound management of records, administrators will be able to derive many benefits from the wealth of information they have in a variety of forms within their organisations.

Most attempts to manage records in African countries have not fully recognised the need to manage records from creation to disposition. Too often, archival institutions have tended to concentrate most of their efforts on the last phase of the records' life cycle, neglecting other phases. The consequences of such neglect have been costly, sometimes resulting in the collapse of record keeping systems. Furthermore, as Mnjama suggests, when records are not managed effectively through the entire life cycle "access to information contained in the records becomes difficult, decisions are delayed and the operations of the organisation become inefficient. Archival functions...also become difficult".²⁴

During the last ten years, a programme has been underway to restructure government record keeping systems in a number of African countries. Recent initiatives to develop efficient systems for managing the information life-cycle have included records management workshops organised by the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers (ACARM), originally the Association of Commonwealth Archivists (ACA), with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat and other donors. To date, eleven workshops have been held as follows: The Gambia (4), Ghana (2), Sierra Leone (1), Uganda (1) Tanzania mainland (1) and Zanzibar (2), all between 1984 and 1995.

The workshops acted as a catalyst in the setting up of

²⁴Mnjama, N M. Railway Records: Their Management and Exploitation in Kenya, PhD Thesis, University College London, October, 1994, pp 19-20

British technical assistance programmes in The Gambia, Ghana and Uganda and, plans are underway for similar projects in Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The study draws upon the lessons learned from the workshops and the programmes that resulted from them as a way of illustrating the benefits that could be derived from a properly-structured and integrated records management programme. The need to provide efficient record keeping systems has become even more urgent with the introduction of public sector reform programmes.

1.6 Hypothesis and analytical framework

The study is based on the assumption that efficient and effective record keeping systems are essential as they enable the government and its agencies to function properly and to implement its programmes. It recognises that records play a vital role in supporting accountability, transparency and efficiency and in underpinning policy development and implementation, planning and decision making in government.

It therefore argues that the administrative reform programme being implemented by the Kenya Government should be underpinned by a properly planned and structured records management programme to ensure that its full benefits are realised. It argues further that the Directorate of Personnel Management, the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat, being key players in the implementation of the reform programme, need to recognise that the failure to manage records properly often has

severe consequences for the organisations concerned, in this case the Kenya Public Service as a whole. Not only is the ability of organisations in the public service to access vital information hampered, but their ability to plan, implement and evaluate policies and programmes is seriously undermined. This means that neither the government nor its officials can be held accountable for their decisions or actions without records to provide supporting evidence.

1.7 Research methods

The author used a variety of research methods to collect data for this study. A detailed review and examination of literature was carried out at the beginning and continued throughout the study. Other methods used included what Ira Penn et al²⁵ describe as the most widely used methods for data collection in archives and records management:

- questionnaires,
- interviews,
- examination of existing documentation,
- examination of records storage conditions/observation of procedures.

The last method, examination of record storage conditions, although suggested was not used as explained in 1.7.4.

²⁵Penn, I A et al. Records Management Handbook (Second Edition), Aldershot: Gower, 1994, pp 59-60

1.7.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were prepared in advance for a number of target groups within the government and donor agencies. They comprised closed-ended and open-ended type questions. The open-ended type questions were to enable detailed information to be gathered about record keeping activities in the public service, and to find out whether there had been any policy changes occasioned by the introduction of the administrative reform programme concerning the manner in which information was maintained and used.

Ideally, questionnaires should have been distributed before the research commenced. However, this could not be done ahead of the official clearance, which had to be obtained in person²⁶ from the Kenya Government through the Office of the President. Research authorization is a must for everyone intending to carry out research of any kind in Kenya.

In the circumstances, the author wrote to various donor agencies informing them about the research but could not send

²⁶The procedure to apply for research clearance from the Office of the President is long and bureaucratic. In the case of University teaching staff, the applicant must first submit a research proposal and an application for funds to the Dean's Committee through the Head of Department and the Faculty Dean. Both the HOD and the Dean are required to give their comments and approval.

After the application is received by the Secretary to the Dean's Committee, a recommendation is made to the Vice-Chancellor, who has to write a letter to accompany the application to the Office of the President. This whole process takes weeks, sometimes months and requires the applicant's presence to be able to make a follow-up.

questionnaires in advance. SAPs have always been a sensitive subject in Kenya, often the cause of acrimonious exchanges between the Government and donors, and this was another reason why it was difficult to distribute the questionnaires early.

As soon as clearance was obtained, the author was able to distribute the questionnaires in person. This method worked in his favour as it enabled him to meet with a good number of the respondents before they completed the questionnaires. It also enabled him to book appointments with the respondents, most of whom requested a preliminary meeting as they needed to understand why a linkage between records management and administrative reform was necessary. The author used these initial meetings to explain the background of the research and its purpose.

1.7.2 Interviews

Initially, interviews were to form the main thrust of the research in order to avoid flaws and inaccuracies which have so often been linked to the use of questionnaires. However, once the research was underway, the methodology was in many cases dictated by the respondents, as the majority were extremely busy people. Some opted for interviews and others for questionnaires. Virtually all the respondents representing the Government side (with few exceptions) were un-enthusiastic about interviews and opted for questionnaires, citing pressure of work within the office environment. They requested that questionnaires be left behind promising to complete them in their own time. Staff of the

Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service were among Government officials who made valuable contributions to the research by completing questionnaires.

The four donor agencies covered by the study were the:

- World Bank,
- International Monetary Fund,
- Overseas Development Administration,
- European Union (EU).

Representatives of all four agencies agreed to either complete a questionnaire or to be interviewed. Some agreed to both. The interviews focused on the nature of the reforms taking place within the public service and donor involvement in the reform process. They sought to elicit the donors' views as to whether they thought records management or the management of information generally had any role to play in the administrative reform programme and whether it could in any way contribute in meeting the reform objectives.

1.7.3 Examination of existing documentation

The following documentation was assembled, studied and analysed as part of the study:

- Public Archives Act (Cap 19), 1965 and Public Archives and Documentation Service (Amendment) Act, 1990,

- reports by the Records Management Division of the Kenya National Archives on the survey of records in Government ministries and departments,
- UNESCO consultancy reports on the role of the Kenya National Archives,
- Kenya Government reports on the implementation of SAPs and civil service reform,
- Kenya Government Sessional Papers on Economic Management and Development,
- Kenya Government internal consultancy reports on the state of records management and current record keeping requirements in the Directorate of Personnel Management and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat,
- World Bank and other consultancy reports on the implementation of SAPs and civil service reform in Kenya,
- newspaper articles and economic reviews on implementation of SAPs and civil service reform in Kenya.

1.7.4 Examination of records storage conditions/observation of procedures

This method was to have been used to observe records' storage conditions and to monitor communication and information flows in the three agencies studied. However, the authorities would not grant the author physical access or permission to carry out these activities. The primary reason given was that the

author was not a civil servant. The authorities also cited reasons such as the sensitivity of government records and the fact that the Government was in the process of restructuring registry operations.

In two agencies, the External Resources Department in the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat, the authorities specifically mentioned that they had operated without proper registries in the past but that measures had now been taken as part of the overall Government restructuring programme to remedy the situation. The author was not given a chance to verify these claims.

Fortunately, the author obtained two internal consultancy reports recently prepared by the Management Consultancy Services Division in the Directorate of Personnel Management. These examine in great detail the nature of records management and record keeping requirements in the DPM and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat. Although the author would have preferred direct access to observe storage conditions and the physical handling and use of records, nonetheless, the two reports provide a great deal of factual information. The fact that these were available greatly enhanced the study.

The environment and conditions under which the research was conducted deserve further comment, particularly since they affected the overall results of the study. The author had to contend with a series of problems which caused a serious setback

to his efforts. The problems encountered ranged from dealing with a complex, over-centralised civil service bureaucracy to delays in obtaining the release of research funds. For example, despite early efforts to obtain research clearance and to obtain the co-operation of Government officials (in November 1994 Dr Thurston, as supervisor, wrote to Nairobi on behalf of the author), approval was not obtained until March 15, 1995 largely because of bureaucratic red tape and delays at Moi University. However, the author would like to thank the officers in the Office of the President who acted with utmost expediency immediately they received the application, which they were able to process in one day.

Research funding was another major drawback. Despite an early application to the Dean's Committee for funds, the first allocation was approved three and a half months after the commencement of the research period and a second allocation one month before the end. Furthermore, the total sum approved fell far below the projected budget.

Equally frustrating was the attitude demonstrated by a majority of the respondents. In spite of earlier assurances to co-operate with the author, they repeatedly failed to honour appointments forcing the author to lose a considerable amount of time. Although the problem was more prevalent among civil servants, the author also had to chase after officials in donor agencies. On average, it took three to four visits and a number of phone calls (in the case of donor agencies) and up-to five or

six visits (in the case of the civil service) to arrange an interview or have a completed questionnaire returned. The excuses were primarily meetings or official engagements outside the office. Some simply admitted a lack of preparedness.

In spite of these frustrations, there were considerable achievements. The author was able to make successful breakthroughs, and a good number of senior officials made valuable contributions to the study. These included Mr Gaylord Avedi, Permanent Secretary/Director, Directorate of Personnel Management), and the senior resident representatives of the IMF and the World Bank, Messrs Walter Mahler and F Stephen O'Brien respectively. Mr Avedi granted a short interview and made a detailed response to a questionnaire. Mr Mahler gave an interview and Mr O'Brien completed a questionnaire.

The author's efforts in seeking the contribution of the Head of the Civil Service, Professor Philip Mbithi, were frustrated through bureaucratic red tape. Access to his office proved virtually impossible.

Although the author met with Mr Koech, Professor Mbithi's personal assistant a number of times in his office with the aim of booking an appointment, the officer insisted that there was no need to involve the Head of the Civil Service, who had a very busy schedule. Reminded that the Civil Service Reform Programme had major implications for the Government and that it was necessary to seek the views of the Government at the highest

level possible, he suggested that a questionnaire be left with him, promising to pass it on to Professor Mbithi. It was not surprising that this first questionnaire went missing and a second one was never returned despite making several personal visits and phone calls. This was frustrating not only because so much time had been wasted, but because after going to the highest office in the public service hierarchy, there was nowhere else to turn. These difficulties help to illustrate the low priority assigned to this critical issue.

1.8 Organisation of the study

The thesis is divided into three major parts comprising nine chapters. Part I sets the scene by looking broadly at the development of records management and administrative reform programmes in a global context and considers the implications of records management for administrative reform. There are four chapters in the section.

Part II focuses on the situation in Kenya. In this section, the main objectives and implementation strategies of the administrative reform programme in Kenya are examined. The section proceeds to examine the nature of records management in the Kenya Public Service, including the role played by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service. It considers the implications of records management for the administrative reform programme in the country. Three case studies form part of this section.

Part III is the summary and conclusions to the study. It considers various solutions to the problems of information and records management identified throughout the study. This section draws upon the lessons learned from other African countries, particularly Ghana and Uganda, which have included records management as a component in public sector reform.

Outline of chapters

This chapter, being the introduction, provides an outline of the study as a whole, describes the purpose and origins of the study, study objectives, limitations, significance and hypothesis. It also describes the research methods used, as well as giving an overview of the structure and a review of related literature on records management and administrative reform. It concludes by illustrating in broad terms the areas of common ground between records management and administrative reform.

Chapter two is a broad overview of the development of records management. It examines factors such as the influence of ancient record keeping practices among the Sumerians, Egyptians, Romans and Greeks; early European record keeping practices that ultimately developed into archives administration; paperwork proliferation during and after World War II and the impact of technology and computerisation on the development of modern records management. The reason for the inclusion of the section on ancient record keeping practices is explained in chapter two.

It concludes by examining the potential contribution of records management to administrative reform and argues that records management remains largely unrecognised in developing countries as a cornerstone of efficient and effective government. The fact that most administrative reform programmes have been conceived and implemented without a records management component means in effect that information is not valued as a vital resource and an asset which has to be effectively managed in order to contribute to good government and development.

Chapter three looks broadly at development administration and administrative reform. It focuses on three key issues namely development, governance and accountability and how they are linked to administrative reform. The chapter also seeks to define ways in which records management could underpin administrative reform.

Chapter four discusses the implications of records management for administrative reform and vice-versa. It examines the consequences for developing countries.

Chapter five looks critically at the development of records management in Kenya (including the role played by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service). There is a strong link between this chapter and chapter seven, which looks at specific case studies in the Kenya Civil Service.

Chapter six provides a detailed examination of the

administrative reform programme in Kenya and its implementation in the public service. The chapter looks at ways in which records management could make a positive impact towards the effective implementation of the reform programme.

Chapter seven draws upon the three case studies carried out in the Directorate of Personnel Management, Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat to explain how the absence of a properly structured records management programme is undermining accountability, transparency and efficiency in the public service. It argues that these agencies, which play strategic roles in the implementation of the reform programme, ought to realise the need for records management as a major component in the reform process. Such a realisation should lead to an urgent review of record keeping systems followed by a restructuring of registries throughout the Government. Ideally, this should take place during the first phase of the administrative reform programme which is already underway and should form a major component in subsequent phases of the programme.

Chapter eight analyses the various contributions by representatives of donor agencies made through questionnaires or interviews on the question of how proper/improper records management systems have contributed to or affected the administrative reform programme being implemented in the public service in Kenya.

The chapter notes that while donors have actively supported the introduction of computerised information systems in the public service to enhance the management of key resources such as finance and personnel, they have failed to recognise that for automated systems to be successfully implemented, they have to be underpinned by properly structured paper systems. In Kenya as in many other developing countries, automated systems are being introduced and implemented with donor assistance, in complete disregard of the need for efficient and effective records management systems.

Chapter nine provides a summary and conclusions. It examines the components of solutions to record keeping problems in Kenya. The chapter critically assesses whether the measures taken so far by the Kenya Government, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service and, to some extent by donors, sufficiently provide for the management of records from creation to disposition. Its main conclusion is that although well-managed records provide the evidence required to underpin accountability, transparency and efficiency in government, not enough has been done to ensure that government information and records are managed as a strategic resource and asset. Therefore, it is critical that records management should be included as a major component in the administrative reform programme in Kenya.

1.9 Review of literature and related sources

This review deliberately focuses on development administration. Although the author has read widely on records management as demonstrated in chapter two and in the bibliography, professional literature on records management is well known. What is new about this study is the link between records management and development issues, something that has not been done before. The review examines the changing nature of development administration and its significance for records and information management.

Significant changes in public administration and governance systems during the last twenty years have resulted in new concepts which are now widely used in the field of development administration. They include "new public management" (NPM), "entrepreneurial management paradigm" (EMP), "reengineering" or "reinventing" government, "accountability" etc which are examined in this review.

The notion of good government or governance is covered extensively in recent literature on administrative reform and structural adjustment programmes. Good governance has become increasingly significant during the 1980s and 1990s as donors have insisted on having it included among the conditionalities for external aid.

Gilles Paquet, a Professor of Administration at the

University of Ottawa in Canada, provides a valuable explanation of how governance evolved over the last fifty years and why it has become so central to public management and administrative reform today. He explains that "governance is about guiding. It is the process through which a socio-economy or any other complex organisation is steered".²⁷

In particular, his views on how governing structures developed in the 1940s are illuminating. He explains that elaborate centralised systems of government emerged after World War II, as a response to more complex systems of administration that many organisations adopted after the war. This gave rise to the presumption that such organisations needed strong leaders with a good understanding of the goals pursued by their organisations. It was therefore incumbent upon such leaders to design control mechanisms that would help bring about these goals.

He observes that some of the governance systems that came into being became too bureaucratic and over-centralised to serve the purposes for which they were intended. This gave rise to the need for governance reform which has continued ever since.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, public bureaucracies thrived as they were boosted by a stable socio-economic and political environment. However, by the 1980s, they had begun to show signs

²⁷Paquet, G. "Paradigms of Governance", in Perspectives on Public Management: Rethinking Government, Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1994, p 19

of dysfunction resulting from their slow capacities to adapt to change. In the 1990s, the reform process in the developed world has focused on making public bureaucracies more flexible and more attentive to changing client needs, as illustrated by the creation of market-type executive agencies in the United Kingdom and special operating agencies in Canada. According to Paquet:

The clan-like organizations, guided by informal and vague governing principles have often produced superior systems of governance... In such a system, decisions are taken in a most effective, fast and contextually relevant way by governance systems based on shared values and vastly empowered civil servants.²⁸

Most organisations are now having to change their style and systems of governance. Paquet believes this has meant "a shift in the centre of gravity in the governance system of most organisations".²⁹ Centralised formal decision making and hierarchical controls previously rigidly applied are being dismantled and replaced by decentralised, informal and interactive governance systems.

Paquet's theory is that today's world is about openness and accountability whereby public policy is formed through a critical dialogue with stakeholders. This ensures that everyone is made aware of the various alternative policy directions and their consequences. It also ensures that public servants learn to listen and to consult and that stakeholders play a more active

²⁸ibid. p 34

²⁹ibid. p 34

role in the decision making process.

This approach marks a radical shift from past governance systems, which relied on tinkering and modest restructuring. Today, the impact of the electronic age, globalization, rapid socio-economic and political change and the complexity of public policy issues has brought about new challenges that call for sustainable reforms.

To address these challenges, the "new public management" movement came into being, designed to provide solutions ("Big Answers")³⁰ to the problems in the public sector.

Donald Savoie observes that the origins of the term "new public management" can be traced to the political leadership which came into office in the United States, Britain and Canada in the late 1970s and 1980s. The use of the term "arose from the conviction that bureaucracy was broken and needed fixing, and that private sector solutions were the key".³¹

When President Clinton came to power in the United States, he launched the National Performance Review Exercise (NPR) intended to overhaul the civil service. The review produced 800 recommendations intended to "reinvent" government by borrowing the best management practices found in private business. The

³⁰Savoie, D J. "What is Wrong with the New Public Management?", in Paul G Thomas, (ed.), Canadian Public Administration, Spring 1995, p 113

³¹ibid. p 112

process resulted in the use of new terms such as "reengineering" or "reinventing" government which are now widely used buzzwords to refer to the process of renewing government.

In Britain, Prime Minister John Major vigorously pursued the various reforms introduced by Margaret Thatcher and added his own, notably the introduction of the "Citizens Charter".

In Canada, Prime Minister Cretien's Government introduced wide-ranging reforms borrowing heavily from the new public management movement. The Government created a new position in the cabinet with responsibility for public service renewal. Other reforms included the introduction of "increased ministerial authority and accountability" that was meant to give more weight to the principle of ministerial responsibility (this principle is widely applicable in Commonwealth countries), creation of "special operating agencies", the "make-or-buy concept" and "Public Service 2000" (PS 2000).

By introducing the reforms, these governments hoped to instil an entrepreneurial spirit in government operations and make organisations more "client-oriented". This gave rise to the use of the term "entrepreneurial management paradigm" which indicates the way in which the private sector and private business continue to influence events in public service management. Savoie asserts that the new public management philosophy:

... is rooted in the conviction that private sector is superior to public administration. The solution, therefore, is to transfer government activities to the private sector through privatisation and contracting out. Given that all government activities can hardly be transferred to the private sector, the next best solution is to transfer business management practices to government operations.³²

Meanwhile, over the last thirty years, there has been a major shift in the way commentators have analysed the role of the state in Africa. As John Healey and Mark Robinson explain:

In the early 1960s there was widespread agreement that the state ought to play a pivotal role in the post-independence period, both to promote development and to provide the basis for a unified national identity. By the early 1980s there was a growing consensus in the literature that the state was no longer able to fulfil these objectives. The traditional emphasis on strengthening its interventionist powers in furthering political integration, engineering social transformation and promoting economic development has subsided. There is now a wholesale critique of the role of the state, within a general policy context defined by structural adjustment, privatisation and liberalisation. As a result, the African state is now increasingly identified with economic stagnation and as lacking in popular legitimacy.³³

Development economists attribute the problems to the concentration of political power at the centre and on colonial systems inherited at independence.³⁴ The World Bank believes these factors have influenced governance systems in Africa in a positive as well as a negative way:

³²ibid. p 113

³³Healey, John and Robinson, Mark. op. cit. p 20

³⁴A detailed discussion on the nature of the colonial inheritance appears in chapter three.

On the positive side, many former colonies inherited systems of financial accountability, an independent civil service, and a legal framework. Because these were imported from outside, however, they have not always taken root. Colonial rule implied accountability to the colonial power rather than to citizens; it thus sometimes destroyed indigenous systems of accountability.³⁵

Mamadou Dia, division chief of the Capacity Building and Implementation Support Division in the Africa Technical Department of the World Bank attributes the weaknesses to the "patrimonial nature of the African state".³⁶

He argues that at independence, the patrimonial state which evolved as part of the colonial inheritance produced "modern" governance and public administration systems which concentrated economic as well as political power in the hands of a few educated elites. By so doing, a large majority of the population in Africa became alienated from the social, economic and political mainstream.

Furthermore, social welfare, economic growth and national interest assumed low priority and accountability became compromised. He explains that "the new states became not only bureaucratic autocracies but also economic and political monopolies, lacking in accountability, transparency and the rule

³⁵The World Bank. op. cit. p 11

³⁶Dia, M. A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank Technical Paper No 225, Washington DC: The World Bank, 1993, p 12

of law".³⁷

In the 1980s and 1990s, various initiatives have been taken aimed at addressing these problems. These have resulted in administrative and public sector reforms being implemented in most African countries. Although the reforms span a wide range of administrative functions, one issue they do not adequately address is the tremendous impact of the "information revolution" which has affected systems and service delivery in virtually every sector in the public service, in both developed and developing countries.

A recent World Bank publication described the effects caused by the information revolution as follows:

A new kind of economy - the information economy - is emerging from the revolution. In this economy, information is the critical resource and the basis for competition...At the social level, a corresponding new society is also emerging. This society's information capabilities are pervasive, making it substantially different from an industrial society...These changes dictate, for all countries, a major agenda for structural adjustment. Developed countries are rapidly pursuing their version of the agenda, and developing countries must do so as well or risk exclusion from a global economy and severe disadvantage in the competitiveness of their goods and services.³⁸

According to the World Bank, the information revolution has

³⁷ibid. p 12

³⁸The World Bank. Harnessing Information for Development: World Bank Group Vision and Strategy (Draft Document), Washington DC: Finance and Private Sector Development Vice-Presidency, Industry and Energy Department and Telecommunications and Information Division, July 1995, p 9

created both "the challenge and the means necessary for successful adjustment. It is critical to the social and economic activities that comprise the development process".³⁹

However, throughout many developing African countries, information systems have not kept pace with the rapidly expanding public administration systems. Public Sector reforms are being implemented with no serious thought being given to the information component. The result is a growing crisis in information management which, if not addressed, will deepen and undermine the ability of governments to function effectively in an information-driven world. Since governments and donors would both like to see the successful implementation of reforms in the public service, they need to collaborate in promoting policies that enhance records and information management.

Improved access to good quality information therefore is a fundamental necessity for good governance in Africa. It is also critical for effective financial management. As some recent studies show, governments in Africa are losing huge revenue through poorly-structured financial information systems.

Mamadou Dia⁴⁰ cites poor record keeping in The Gambia as one of the factors contributing to the lack of transparency in the revenue collection process. Pino Akotia observes that "a

³⁹ibid. p 19

⁴⁰Dia, M. Africa's Management in the 1990s and Beyond: Reconciling Indigenous and Transplanted Institutions, Washington D C: The World Bank, 1996, pp 46-47

major defect in financial administration arises from the failure to integrate accounting and registry systems...Public records, if well-managed have the potential of providing a meaningful resource by which both the executive and the government could present themselves as honest, well-meaning and accountable".⁴¹

Members of parliament and public accounts committees are among those regularly handicapped by the inability to obtain financial information from the government bureaucracy. The inaccessibility of such vital information by legislatures has proved a major hindrance to constructive debates on government fiscal and budgetary policies. Mamadou Dia observes that:

The traditional role of legislatures in the budgeting process is not widely practiced in Africa. African legislatures all too often lack much of the critical information essential to the exercise of legislative oversight.⁴²

Most governmental systems in Africa inherited and have maintained the British tradition based on the registry as the central point of control for the management of current records. Registries therefore remain the main source and providers of paper-based information throughout the public service.

However, unless records are managed from creation to disposition, access to information contained in the records

⁴¹Akotia, Pino. "Managing Public Sector Financial Records in The Gambia: the Implications for Good Government", Information Development, Vol 11, No 4, December 1995, pp 206-210

⁴²Dia, M. op. cit. p 13

remains buried and cannot be availed either for decision making or as the basis for accountability. In 1991, Tom Sherman, Chairperson of the Electoral and Administrative Reform Commission in Australia noted that:

The proper keeping of records and the proper disposal of records...is crucial to good public administration...Records, after all, are the lifeblood of institutions...they form an important foundation...for accountability...the proper control of records really starts at the creation of records and I believe that agencies which don't have good records management systems from their creation through to the archival stage will not survive the new accountability era.⁴³

Therefore, as public sector reforms are implemented in Africa, it is essential that these initiatives include specific measures designed to overhaul existing records management systems, pave the way for the management of electronic records and provide for a proper interface between paper and electronic systems. This is extremely important because, as computerisation is introduced to most areas of public sector operations to enhance the management of key resources, it is bound to affect the manner in which information is created, used and maintained. This will also entail major consequences for government generally as well as for national archival institutions.

1.10 Conclusion

The chapter has described in detail the purpose and origins of the study, its significance and the research methodology used.

⁴³Quoted in S McKemish and F Upward (eds.). op. cit. p 23

Based on an extensive literature review and on the findings of the field investigation, the study concludes that records as well as information management activities are not only essential but critical in enhancing accountability and good governance. They must therefore be included as core activities in the government reform programme in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPMENT OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the development of records management as a profession and the factors which have influenced and contributed to its growth internationally over the years. Among the issues examined are the early record keeping practices in the ancient civilisations of Sumeria, Egypt, Greece and Rome. The inclusion of this section is primarily to demonstrate that record keeping has been practised since the days of ancient civilisations as evidence of accountability and a means of ensuring that the state is accountable for its actions. Also examined are the early European archival practices that ultimately developed into the profession that is to-day known as archive administration. In addition, this chapter provides the background and context for understanding current trends and developments in records and information management, including developments in computerisation and their implications for records management.

The chapter demonstrates that the development of modern records management as a technique applied to the life cycle management of records did not take place until after the Second World War. This was mainly in response to the proliferation of paperwork generated as a result of the activities of the numerous

war-related agencies in existence at the time. Despite these early initiatives, paperwork proliferation has continued to grow because of new advances in technology, including computerisation.

Finally, the chapter includes a discussion on the development of records management services in Kenya. It examines policies and measures undertaken by the Government to improve records and information management in the public sector.

2.2 Early developments in records management

Penn et al⁴⁴ observe that the term records management was not used until mid 20th century but that records management as a function goes back a long time. They assert that the Sumerian civilisation produced the first written records on clay tablets around 5000 B.C.. The "Sumerian records dealt with business matters such as taxes, loans, and inventories, and they were managed by the temple priests who controlled the Sumerian economy".⁴⁵

This information is most valuable because it demonstrates that from a very early period, records were deliberately created and carefully preserved as evidence of the official business transactions of the government of the day and were used to provide evidence of accountability.

⁴⁴Penn, I A et al. op. cit. p 8

⁴⁵ibid. p 8

Victoria Lemieux⁴⁶ believes that record keeping is an ancient activity that began with the development of writing. She asserts that "as soon as societies became accountable through records, they became accountable for records".⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Luciana Duranti points out that record keeping was so highly respected in the ancient world that in Sumeria it was considered next in importance to those functions performed by the king and the high priest, but far more important in terms of knowledge. Because of the prestige associated with it, "King Anam of Uruk in the 4th c. B.C. retained his title of archivist even though he was king because of the intellectual distinction".⁴⁸ Duranti further observes that in ancient Sumeria "great care was taken in the design of record keeping systems".⁴⁹

The record keeping culture then gradually spread throughout most of the ancient civilisations. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all maintained properly designed record keeping systems. Posner⁵⁰ observes that the Egyptians lived with the annual inundation of the river Nile. Therefore, record keeping was considered central to their civilisation because it allowed

⁴⁶Lemieux, V. "The Life-Cycle Concept: A Unifying Force". Unpublished paper presented at the Caribbean Seminar on National Archives and the Challenges of Information Management, Trinidad, 28th March - 5th April 1995, p 2

⁴⁷ibid. p 2

⁴⁸Duranti, Luciana. "The Odyssey of Records Managers", ARMA Quarterly, July 1989, p 3

⁴⁹ibid. p 3

⁵⁰Posner, Ernst. Archives in the Ancient World, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, p 11

them to continue in a stable state even after the floods because land ownership could be verified by the cadastral records that were maintained. As in Sumeria, the records guaranteed some form of accountability.

The term archives is derived from the ancient Greek word archeion, which meant seat of the magistracy. Although the term had a variety of meanings depending on the context in which it was used (examples include government palace, general administrator, office of the magistrate, records office, original records and repository for original records),⁵¹ the archeion provided the central repository where every magistrate in Athens was required to deposit personal records or archives. Again this was significant given that in doing their magisterial duties, magistrates were looked upon as the defenders of the public trust and had a duty to ensure public accountability.

The Roman Empire similarly attached great importance to good record keeping as attested to by the establishment of the first public archives in Rome, the Aerarium, where the records of the Republican Senate were held, and the construction of the Tabularium, a fire-proof building that replaced the Aerarium in 79 B.C..

However, following the defeat and fall of the Roman Empire to the Barbarians, record keeping took on less importance during the early medieval period, as oral culture favoured by the

⁵¹Duranti, Luciana. op. cit. p 6

Barbarians took over from literacy. It was not until the 12 c. **A.D.** that record keeping re-emerged as an important function, and the written document regained pre-eminence as the most authoritative attestation of will.⁵²

2.3 Development of modern records management

The development of records management is credited to the establishment of European archival institutions, notably the Archives Nationales in France in 1789, and the concerted efforts of the United States Government in promoting better management of records throughout its agencies. Penn et al point out that the founding of the Archives Nationales "provided for unified administration of archives, including the records of public agencies",⁵³ and influenced the development of many of the archival principles and terminology commonly used in archives and records management to-day.

These developments are thought to have influenced, even if only indirectly, the enactment of the British Public Record Office (PRO) Act in 1838, which established "the principle of a centralised Public Record Office under the direction of a records administrator",⁵⁴ and the "British Order in Council authorising

⁵²Couture, Carol and Rousseau, Jean Yves. The Life of A Document, Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1987, p 22

⁵³Penn, I A et al. op. cit. p 9

⁵⁴ibid. p 9

the destruction of valueless material".⁵⁵

In 1889 the first General Records Disposal Act was passed by the United States Congress, followed by the establishment of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 1934. The establishment of the PRO, NARA and other archival institutions in Europe was of fundamental significance to the growth and development of both the archives and records management professions as we know them to-day. However, it was NARA, through its persistent efforts, that ultimately refined the principles of records management and evolved the life cycle concept. Penn et al observe that:

With the development of the life cycle concept, records management went from being a series of sporadic and un-related efforts to an organised, structured, and logically-based approach to creating, maintaining and disposing of recorded information.⁵⁶

They observe further that the life cycle is to-day the foundation of all records management principles, practices, methods and techniques.⁵⁷

Although these initial achievements were very important for the future development of records management, Shlomo Porat,⁵⁸ a

⁵⁵ibid. p 9

⁵⁶ibid. p 9

⁵⁷ibid. p 9

⁵⁸Porat, Shlomo. "Records Management in the Third World", International Records Management Journal, Vol 3, No 1, January 1987, p 14

records management consultant and member of the Supreme Records Management Council of Israel, noted in 1987 that it was not until after World War II that serious attention began to be paid to record keeping. He observes that it was during the Second World War that the problem of records handling reached a crisis point. The war efforts of the Allies were responsible for creating many new offices at a time when many shortages, both of manpower and of material resources, were being experienced. It was then that the need arose to critically examine record keeping practices in order to create efficiency and effectiveness in the handling of paperwork.

Later, in 1949, the United States Government made a big assault on paperwork. According to Emmet J Leahy and Christopher A Cameron, it was during this time that "former President Herbert Hoover established the Task Force on Records Management as part of the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government. Until then, only a few of the Federal agencies had made an effort to develop effective programs for the management of their records".⁵⁹

The combination of the recommendations made by the Hoover Commission Task Force and the Government's own campaign to reduce expenditure and secure savings in office space inspired Congress to recommend that the General Services Administration assume

⁵⁹Leahy, Emmet J and Cameron, Christopher A. Modern Records Management: A Basic Guide to Records Control, Filing, and Information Retrieval, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965, p 11

responsibility for promoting better management of records throughout government.

The following year in 1950, Congress passed the Federal Records Act that required each agency to establish a continuing records management programme. As a result of the new law, more economical storage of records and the recovery of office space and equipment was realised, saving both the United States Government and the taxpayer huge sums of money.

The Hoover Commission Task Forces on Records Management, besides promoting better management of records throughout the United States Government, also examined the early archival principles developed in Europe and refined them to develop a new profession called records management.

Writing in 1965, Leahy and Cameron conclude that in the United States of America, "Records management is now recognized as an integral part of effective office administration by hundreds of companies and government organizations. Strides have been made to define the scope and cost of the creation and squirreling of worthless paper, and to come up with practical solutions to records control problems".⁶⁰

⁶⁰ibid. p v

2.4 Records management in the information age

Traditionally, records have been created and maintained in paper form. As a result, professionals in the field of archives and records management have chiefly been accustomed to working with paper documents, and there has been a tendency to associate records management with paper records only. But as Kesner points out, "emerging technologies have dramatically altered the context within which these professionals operate".⁶¹ Penn et al refer to this new context as "the changing record media and the advent of electronic record keeping".⁶² Kesner observes further that "each record medium and type raises its own problems of storage, preservation, access, and use".⁶³ In recent years, these developments have influenced records managers and archivists to start paying much closer attention to the relationship between paper records and records created and maintained in other formats.

Although records are recorded information and can be defined as "any information captured in reproducible form that is required for conducting business",⁶⁴ it has to be stressed that the emergence and widespread use of new technology is rapidly transforming the way organisations work, make decisions,

⁶¹Kesner, Richard M. Automation for Archivists and Records Managers: Planning and Implementation Strategies, Chicago: 1984, p vii

⁶²Penn, I A et al. op. cit. p 9

⁶³Kesner, Richard M. op. cit. p 20

⁶⁴Emmerson, Peter (Ed.). op. cit. p 5

communicate and even the way that they record their activities. Many organisations now operate in a new environment, that of the information society, in which information is increasingly becoming recognised as a strategic resource and an asset.

Information is defined in various ways by different specialists. While not attempting to go over these definitions, a few examples are cited. Penn et al define information as "the raw facts, commonly referred to as data, or it could be knowledge, which would be the same facts evaluated, organized and synthesized into meaningful intelligence".⁶⁵

Moreover, they also state that records management is the process by which an organisation's information must be managed, ie evaluated, organised and synthesised so that it can be used. They therefore conclude that "with a properly structured records management programme, an organisation can control both the quality and quantity of the information in a manner that effectively serves its needs; and it can efficiently dispose of the information when it is no longer valuable".⁶⁶

Rick Barry, formerly Chief of the Information Services Division of the World Bank, and now a consultant defines information as "the sources of knowledge needed to carry out the

⁶⁵Penn, I A et al. op. cit. p 3

⁶⁶ibid. p 7

affairs of business or government".⁶⁷ A record, on the other hand, is, "any information produced by individuals, organizations or even automatically by systems within organizations according to specified computer programs, in the normal course of business and recorded in some medium that permits intelligent future presentation".⁶⁸

He defines information management as "the means through which information is discovered, logically organized in information directories and systems and readily made known to authorized managers and action officers".⁶⁹ Records management encompasses the "policies, procedures, systems, institutions and human resources used to create, use, manage, preserve and dispose of records throughout their life cycle".⁷⁰

He is of the view that the relationship between records management and information management has not always been appreciated. He believes the reason is because "many people think in terms of paper-based information systems when using the term records management and digital information when using the term information management".⁷¹

⁶⁷Barry, Richard E. Notes prepared for an awareness-raising seminar for permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries on "Information Management for the Public Service: The Transition from Paper to Electronic Records", Kampala, Uganda, February 1995

⁶⁸ibid. p 8

⁶⁹ibid. p 8

⁷⁰ibid. p 8

⁷¹ibid. p 8

Meanwhile, Diana Sangway, formerly an information manager in the British Civil Service and now a consultant, defines information management as:

The means through which an organisation maximises the efficiency with which it plans, collects, organises, uses, controls, disseminates and disposes of its information and through which it ensures that the value and potential value of that information is identified and exploited to the fullest extent.⁷²

She observes that organisations use information for three main purposes:

For top-level decision making as policy and business strategy are formulated; for operations and casework (in which information is equivalent to the raw material in a manufacturing process); and for management of all areas of business, policy functions, operations and common services.⁷³

Most organisations are now beginning to recognise and to treat information as a vital strategic resource. Therefore, records managers and archivists can no longer afford to ignore the need to explore the link between records management and information management. Peter Emmerson, Chief Archivist at Barclays Bank PLC acknowledges this fact by noting that "in this age of information it (records management) is also the means by which the valuable information which is contained in those

⁷²Quoted in Cynthia J Durance (Compiler). Management of Recorded Information: Converging Disciplines. Proceedings of the International Council on Archives' Symposium on Current Records, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, May 15-17, 1989, Munchen: K.G. Saur, 1989, p 178

⁷³ibid. p 180

records is released in support of that business".⁷⁴

Maedke et al⁷⁵ stress the fact that records management programmes strive to achieve an orderly, efficient flow of information within an organisation and that they have a bearing on whether the organisation is effectively managed. Donald Skupsky⁷⁶, an information management consultant supports the view that records must be well-managed and effectively organised so that valuable information is not lost and an organisation's ability to function is not undermined or compromised. Carl Weise agrees. He states that the failure to control information is not "just a minor lapse or an insignificant concern but a case of bad management".⁷⁷

Benedon laments the absence of institutional policies to regulate the management of records as well as information. He points to the fact that:

Generally not much thought is given to records keeping per se. Most of it is done haphazardly and casually. There is little relationship between the amount of time and expense and the need and value of the records

⁷⁴Emmerson, Peter (Ed.). op. cit. p 25

⁷⁵Maedke, W O et al. Information and Records Management, California: Glencoe Publishing Co., 1987, p 5

⁷⁶Skupsky, Donald S. Records Retention Procedures, Colorado: Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 1991, p 168

⁷⁷Weise, Carl E. "Records Management: The Management Science Too Long Ignored", in Records Management Quarterly, Vol 20, No 2, 1986, p 32

themselves.⁷⁸

Like Penn et al, he advocates a properly structured records management programme by stating that:

The objective of an organized approach to the management of information must have two goals - first, to obtain maximum value from the information resource, and second, to obtain that value in an orderly, productive and cost-effective manner.⁷⁹

2.5 Records management in the electronic age

The first business application of computers in government and in the private sector was after the Second World War. The introduction of mainframe computers and punch cards, the most widely used systems at the time, was so expensive that only limited business applications could be automated. Because of this, most organisations gave priority to automating core business activities such as payroll, accounts, stores, management and personnel. An equally limiting factor was the fact that development of hardware and software demanded significant financial investment and skills which the public sector could ill-afford at the time.

However, during the 1970s and 1980s significant changes occurred including "the advent of PC's, the dramatic fall in the

⁷⁸Benedon, W. "Management Information: An Inter-Disciplinary Approach", International Records Management Journal, Vol 3, No 1, January 1987, p 14

⁷⁹ibid. p 3

cost of hardware and...the availability of packaged software suitable for government business operations.⁸⁰ As a result of these changes, public sector organisations were able to identify more business processes that could be automated. The changes similarly reduced the dependence on I.T. departments in most organisations.

Revolutionary technological advances and innovations in I.T. have affected records managers and archivists in both developed and developing countries in a significant way. However, for developing countries the consequences have been even more daunting. Records managers and archivists in developing countries have to grapple immediately with the fact that computers are being introduced in government business operations on a scale and speed that were never anticipated. This has meant that these professionals are now having to deal with or advise on issues related to electronic records of which they have little or no experience. A further consequence of the electronic/information age for records managers and archivists in developing countries is the fact that with the widespread use of computers in the public and private sectors, the nature and format of information and records which they have to deal with is changing rapidly.

In developing countries, where the problems of un-managed paper records in the public sector remain a constant threat,

⁸⁰Maclean, David. "IS/IT Strategy in the United Kingdom and Developing Countries: An Overview of Practical Experience". Unpublished paper presented at COMNET-IT '95, Malta, 30 October-1 November 1995, p 1

computerisation could create even more serious problems unless properly structured manual systems can be put in place to provide a firm basis for automation. Moreover, computerisation projects are being conceived and implemented as a component of administrative reform programmes at the behest of donors, particularly the World Bank, without a proper assessment of the overall information environment in the public service as a whole. Not only does this approach create problems of ownership and sustainability when donor funding ceases, but even more significant is the fact that archivists and records managers, who by virtue of their training and expertise are responsible for most of the paper-based records generated by government agencies, often have little input in the design of national information strategies. Yet, computerisation offers many opportunities for enhancing the physical as well as intellectual control of records. For example, with automated systems large quantities of information could be manipulated more easily and disseminated faster and more efficiently within and across government. Even in developing countries, computerisation has facilitated wider access to information.

There are other implications for archivists and records managers. Computerisation is revolutionising the way public organisations create, disseminate, maintain and use information. This means these professionals must urgently begin to address issues such as who creates and who takes responsibility for filing the electronic record and what procedures and standards need to be observed to ensure that information in electronic

media is accurate, reliable and authentic. The immediate task facing these professionals in developing countries is to understand the nature of these challenges and their overall impact on the archives and records management professions as well as the effect on the information environment within government as a whole.

These changes have given rise to a whole new range of professional and policy issues that must be addressed collectively by records managers, archivists, I.T. experts and senior managers in the public service. An integrated approach that looks broadly at professional as well as policy issues on information management as a whole and not just computerisation is desirable. It is critical that information management systems, whether manual or automated, must be planned in ways that not only fulfil the criteria for physical and intellectual control of information, but which also meet the requirements for public accountability.

2.6 The development of records management services in Kenya

Musila Musembi, Director of the Kenya National Archives and author of Archives Management: The Kenya Experience,⁸¹ blames the colonial administration in Kenya for failing to evolve a culture of effective record keeping in the country. In an article

⁸¹Musila, Musembi. Archives Management: The Kenya Experience, Nairobi: Africa Book Services, 1985. Besides this book, Mr Musembi is widely published in regional and international journals and is a regular contributor of papers at conferences.

presented at an ECARBICA conference (now ESARBICA),⁸² he argues that:

Kenya, perhaps more than any other African country, experienced the greatest loss of official documentation during the colonial period. Right from the 1890s when it was declared a Protectorate, no effective measures were taken to safeguard non-current records. A series of official circulars were issued by the colonial administration but they could not achieve any meaningful results.⁸³

The negligence referred to by Musembi was to persist until the year 1962 when the administration decided to enact legislation providing a framework for the management and disposal of court records. In Kenya, as in many other countries, the immense storage and retrieval problems caused by the rapid accumulation of court records became easily noticeable to the colonial administration. It led to the enactment of the Records Disposal Act (Cap 14).⁸⁴

This Act addressed the issue of court records but made no reference to other categories of public records. Musembi observes that "by 1965, it had become quite clear to the Kenya Government that the disposal of all official records had to be more firmly

⁸²ESARBICA stands for East and Southern Africa Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives.

⁸³Musila, Musembi. "Archives Development in Kenya", p 1. (The article is not dated).

⁸⁴Kenya, Republic of. The Records Disposal Act (Cap 14), Nairobi: Government Printer, 1962

controlled".⁸⁵ This led to the enactment of the Public Archives Act (Cap 19) of 1965, which formally established the Kenya National Archives (now the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service), as the central agency responsible for archives and records management in the country.

Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963 and became a republic on 12th December 1964. Despite the enactment of the two laws and the establishment of the National Archives, the new Government's primary concern was not the management of current and semi-current records, but how to clear the huge backlogs of records that had continued to accumulate in ministries and departments during those many years of neglect. The speed and urgency with which this exercise had to be carried out meant that most of the records ended up being transferred to the National Archives before they were appraised.

The introduction of records management in Kenya is credited to Ian Maclean, an Australian archivist. Mnjama⁸⁶ observes that the most comprehensive study on records management in Kenya was undertaken by Ian Maclean, in his capacity as a UNESCO consultant to the Kenya Government in 1978. In his report to both the Kenya Government and UNESCO, he recommends that the Public Archives Act should be broadened to include records management. He notes that:

⁸⁵Musila, Musembi. "The Role of Records and Archives Management in Public Administration". Unpublished paper presented at a seminar of senior government administrators held at the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA), Kabete, November 1985, p 1

⁸⁶Mnjama, N M. op. cit. p 45

The present Act, though quite admirable as an Act for a conservative public archives organisation, obviously needs broadening to cover the wider objectives of the National Archives. In particular, no records management programme will succeed without proper emphasis being placed on the responsibilities of the various arms and offices of Government.⁸⁷

Although the Act was not amended to incorporate Maclean's recommendation (the 1990 amendment was to create the National Documentation Service as a division within the National Archives), Musembi confirms that the recommendation was accepted by the Government, and it formed the basis of the Office of the President Circular, No. OP 1/48A/66 of 28 November 1985, which required ministries and departments to play a more active role in managing their current and semi-current records.

Maclean's report also recommended the establishment of regional record centres.⁸⁸ Although a decision to establish record centres had been taken by the National Archives as far back as 1975 and a circular issued to that effect,⁸⁹ the plan was shelved because of the department's limited budget and inadequate personnel at the time. However, following the recommendation by Maclean, the plan was once again revived by the National Archives as one way of decentralising its services, first to the provinces and later on to the districts. This led

⁸⁷Maclean, Ian. Kenya: Development of Information Infrastructure, Technical Report (FRM/BEP/PGI/78/128), Paris: UNESCO, 1978, p 2

⁸⁸ibid. p 2

⁸⁹Kenya National Archives. Proposal to Establish Provincial Record Centres. Circular No.ARC(CGO)-1/110 of 16 April 1975

to five record centres being established between 1980 and 1990 in various parts of the country. These form the backbone of the records management programme in the entire public service in Kenya.

Other measures taken by the Government as part of a progressive records management programme have included incorporating records management duties in the Scheme of Service for Executive Officers, which in theory gives them the responsibility for the day-to-day control of current records. In practice this arrangement has not resulted in better management of records in the public service. The Government has also introduced a compulsory section on records management in the Proficiency Syllabus for Clerical Officers and an in-service training programme run by the National Archives and funded by the Directorate of Personnel Management to train various cadres of staff in the civil service in records management. In February/March 1996, the Government hosted an international seminar on the implications of electronic records for governments in commonwealth Africa. Despite the success of the seminar, the Kenya Government is yet to set in motion plans for coping with the issues involved.

Although the Government is to be commended for its efforts, the measures it has taken so far don't go far enough. What is needed is a properly structured records management programme which ensures that records, regardless of media, are effectively managed based on the life cycle concept. The life cycle concept

lends itself to managing records efficiently and effectively in their current, semi-current and non-current stages. The concept has not been fully embraced in Kenya.

2.7 Conclusion

The chapter has analysed the various stages in the development of records management internationally and concludes that public as well as private sector organisations have practised records management since the Second World War as an effective tool for controlling information to support decision making, efficiency and to manage organisational resources. Also, by applying sound records management practices, organisations have been able to control information from creation to disposition.

For Kenya, these international developments reinforce the need to develop comprehensive policies for the systematic control of records and information in the public service. The policies adopted must enhance the management of information as a strategic resource. Moreover, as computerisation is increasingly adopted to manage vital resources in the public service, the Government must develop mechanisms for wider consultations on records and information management issues at professional as well as policy level.

CHAPTER THREE

ISSUES IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the relationship between development administration and records management. In the chapter the author argues that although developing countries have set about implementing macro-economic and administrative reform programmes, the success of these programmes is likely to be undermined by weaknesses inherent in the public administration systems of the various countries involved. Therefore, donor agencies notably the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the governments concerned must join hands in seeking solutions to these problems.

One such problem, and an important one, is the lack of efficient and effective records and information management systems which can be relied upon to provide timely, reliable and authentic information or data required to support decision making, development planning or accountability and transparency in government. Because of poor or inadequate record keeping systems, many developing countries today find themselves constrained in their development efforts and unable to provide efficient public services.

3.2 Concept of development administration

Development administration has evolved over the last thirty years to become a widely recognised discipline of academic study and practice in the social sciences. There is now a distinct category of professionals known as development administration specialists, most of whom work in government, universities, research and training institutes and in development agencies worldwide. The recognition given this group of professionals by international development agencies has enabled them to successfully influence trends in development thinking and practice. As early as 1983, the World Bank devoted one issue in its World Development Report Series⁹⁰ to an examination of contemporary issues in development.

The mass of literature available on the subject, however, attests to the lack of a consensus on issues affecting development. Yet, as Dr Fashole Luke, an academic at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia observes:

A common theme running through most of the literature highlights a concern with the creation, maintenance, and strengthening of organisational and administrative capacity - to facilitate efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, and equity.⁹¹

⁹⁰The World Bank. World Development Report, Washington, DC: The World Bank/Oxford University Press, 1993

⁹¹Luke, D F. "Trends in Development Administration: The Continuing Challenge to the Efficacy of the Post-Colonial State in the Third World", in Public Administration and Development, Vol 6, No 1, 1986, p 74

3.3 Definition of development administration

A wide range of definitions of "development administration" have been suggested by various authors and specialists on the subject. Although the definitions vary considerably in scope and philosophy, they all appear to be concerned with what Luke terms "building organisational and administrative capacity" to meet development goals in the most efficient manner. Riggs is among those who see the objectives of development administration as being partly to bring about an improvement in administrative capacities. He defines development administration as:

The administration of development programmes, to the methods used by large-scale organisations, notably governments, to implement policies and plans designed to meet development objectives...and to...the improvement of administrative capacities.⁹²

Meanwhile, some specialists see development administration as being applicable only to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). This group includes Hope, Swerdlow and Schaffer. Hope, a Professor of Development Studies at the University of Botswana and a United Nations Adviser to the Government of Botswana, defines development administration as:

...the efficient organisation and management of development activities of a nation to attain the goals of development...the conscious study of the conditions of public administration in the least-developed countries...the study of what is expected of public

⁹²Quoted in D F Luke. "Trends in Development Administration", *ibid.* p 74

administration in the LDCs.⁹³

Like Hope, Swerdlow refers to "those countries that are seeking development and starting at low levels of economic productivity".⁹⁴ Schaffer asserts that:

...development administration is about development programmes, policies and projects...in those conditions in which there are unusually wide and new demands in which there are peculiarly low capacities and severe obstacles in meeting them.⁹⁵

Despite the varying definitions of development administration and the lack of a consensus on what its goals are, Wilson sums up its mission as being "to straighten the paths of government".⁹⁶

Development specialists also insist on making a distinction between development administration and public administration. They contend that public administration, which is the longer established discipline of the two, has sometimes been regarded as being independent of development administration whereas at other times as a sub-discipline of the latter. To illustrate the

⁹³Hope, K R. The Dynamics of Development and Development Administration, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984, p 65

⁹⁴Swerdlow, I. The Public Administration of Economic Development, New York: Praeger, 1975, p 347

⁹⁵Schaffer, B B. The Administrative Factor: Papers in Organisation, Politics, and Development, London: Frank Cass, 1973, p 245

⁹⁶Wilson, W. "The Study of Administration", in Political Science Quarterly, LV1, 1987, p 485

nature of the debate, Gant asserts that "development administration is distinguished from, although not independent of other aspects and concerns of public administration".⁹⁷ Far from resolving the issue, Luke emphasises that "while the parameters of development administration can be readily defined and understood, its status vis-a-vis the longer established discipline of public administration has seemed problematic".⁹⁸

In spite of these various viewpoints and opinions, three common concerns emerge which are seen to underpin development administration today. These are:

- the need to build effective administrative capacity capable of sustaining the development process,
- the necessity to develop administrative systems that are responsive and accountable,
- the need to adopt development strategies that are geared to achieving economic sustainability as well as meeting society's basic needs, notably health care, education, housing and productive employment. In other words, a development strategy promising greater human dignity, security, justice and equity.

⁹⁷Gant, G F. Development Administration: Concepts, Goals, Methods, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979, p 21

⁹⁸Luke, D F. op. cit. p 75

3.4 Impact of colonial administration on development

The development process in Africa and in developing countries as a whole is in many ways a consequence of the colonial establishment which placed development among its lowest priorities. This was certainly the case in the period prior to the 1930s. After the 1930s increasing emphasis was placed on "development and welfare" as illustrated by the Grants-in-Aid scheme⁹⁹ introduced by the British Government to assist development in the colonies. Scholars and analysts of colonial policy have argued that these efforts were far too little and too late and that the major preoccupation of colonial governments was the enforcement of law and order, not the promotion of development. The consequences were that the colonial administration ended up committing most human and financial resources to law and order, while it set aside only an insignificant portion for development. Luke alludes to this by pointing out that:

The administrative capacity of colonial government was fairly adequate for its limited functions of the maintenance of law and order, the establishment of seemingly reasonable infrastructures and services and the raising of sufficient revenue to pay for them.¹⁰⁰

The point is that no colonial government was keen to invest resources, human or financial, in what it felt made no direct

⁹⁹See also footnotes 2 and 3 in chapter five on Colonial, Welfare and Development Acts passed in 1940 and 1945.

¹⁰⁰Luke, D F. op. cit. p 77

contribution to the enforcement of law and order. Because of this attitude, some scholars have accused colonial governments of adopting a paternalistic attitude and of being obsessed with law and order regardless of the opinion of the local populations. Not only was there no avenue of voicing disapproval of what the government did, there was no way of compelling it to be accountable for its actions. Hence, for the majority of post-colonial societies, the end of colonialism and the attainment of independence heralded the beginning of the struggle for development. Unfortunately, this struggle was to be obscured for many years by the euphoria of independence.

By the time of independence a variety of distinct social and political trends had emerged in most post-colonial societies which henceforth determined both the direction and pace of development. These were:

- administrative structures inherited from the colonial bureaucracy that did not effectively cater for the development process,
- a colonial bureaucracy which by independence had created a new breed of political and bureaucratic elites with access to the appropriate agencies and vital resources which they used not for development purposes but to cultivate personal power and influence,
- the emergence of a minority class of political and bureaucratic elites who controlled valuable and substantial national resources and who made crucial decisions on behalf

of the masses in matters concerning development.

These developments gave rise to serious concerns among the vast majority of the population about the legitimacy and credibility of most post-independence governments. Therefore, for these governments to win public confidence and demonstrate that they were different from their predecessor colonial regimes, they needed to provide leadership through participation in development. They were soon to discover that this could not be achieved easily until the requisite administrative capacities had been put in place. Thus, from the 1970s onwards, developing countries emphasised building administrative capacity as an essential component and complement to development. The first United Nations Development Decade, for example, which lasted from 1961-71, was both a recognition of and a response to these various initiatives to evolve a sustainable development strategy in developing countries.

Throughout the 1970s and thereafter, various measures were proposed as a means of enhancing development in developing countries. They included development planning, manpower development, staff training, organization development and management training, human resource management, and administrative reform. Despite the information revolution and the fact that developing countries largely depend upon paper records or documents as the basis for most of their decisions and actions, sadly the measures put forward did not encompass records management. Information remained largely unrecognised as an

essential resource and asset which could be exploited for development or governance purposes.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the Washington-based Bretton Woods institutions, notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), came up with the structural adjustment policy, described in development circles as the most drastic remedy of development administration. Based on this policy, the World Bank and IMF, working in close collaboration with other donor agencies, sought to restrict the role of the state and instead give greater opportunity to the private sector by letting market forces determine development priorities. The structural adjustment policy has since become the yardstick for determining most bilateral as well as multi-lateral technical assistance and project aid programmes.

Strong criticisms have emerged directed at the "solutions" proposed by the World Bank not just by governments in developing countries but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academics. Schaffer, an academic at Sussex University in an article "deadlock in development" casts doubt on the sustainability of these solutions. He states:

At the heart and core of the development administration movement, whatever the variety of its sources and concerns...(lies)...the difficulty of change and the inadequacy, if not worse, of mere improvement of administrative conditions.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹Quoted in in C Leys (ed.). Politics and Change in Developing Countries, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969, p 185

Citing Africa as a case study, perhaps the most serious indictment of the World Bank has come from John Tuman, an academic in the Department of Political Science at Pennsylvania State University. He writes:

The findings of a number of recent studies suggest that orthodox structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have failed to generate an economic recovery in sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, many of the "adjusting" countries have continued to suffer from negative annual growth rates in real GDP per capita, declining wages, and rising levels of illiteracy, disease, and malnutrition...Yet despite the widespread recognition of the persistence of Africa's economic crisis, there has been comparatively little argument regarding the longterm viability, or efficacy of SAPs.¹⁰²

Contributing to the "adjustment debate", Bade Onimode, Professor of Economics at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria notes:

The adjustment programmes formulated by the World Bank and IMF may achieve short-term stabilisation measures, however, the underlying structural causes of economic stagnation will remain unabated.¹⁰³

According to Onimode, SAPs have not been effective in guaranteeing growth and financial stabilisation, even judging by the World Bank and IMF assessments. He rejects the common belief among development specialists, that SAPs are the answer to the

¹⁰²Tuman, J P. A review of Bade Onimode's forthcoming book, "A future for Africa: Beyond the Politics of Adjustment", in The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol 33, No 1, March 1995, p 164

¹⁰³Quoted in D Kimble (ed.), The Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol 33, No 1, March 1995, p 165

development crisis in developing countries, particularly Africa. His counteracting argument is that in the case of Africa "it would be nearly impossible to know whether or not African states would have been worse off if they had not adopted SAPs".¹⁰⁴

Any attempt to examine issues on development and capacity building in developing countries must focus on the weaknesses which have characterised the existing administrative structures and institutions, undermining their ability to deliver or support development initiatives. Luke is quick to point out the strong connection between development administration and what he calls viable institutions of the nation state. He writes:

Building capacity also requires institutions of the nation-state that will facilitate popular accountability and, through the dynamics of such pressure generate sustainable capacity to respond to sustainable needs.¹⁰⁵

Scholars of development theory point out that there are two distinct models of development administration. The first is the bureaucratic model which perceives development administration as a technical, routine and non-political process of carrying out pre-determined plans established by bureaucratic elites in collaboration with international consultants. This model tends to exclude the general population from the decision-making process and decisions are the result of top-down action.

¹⁰⁴ibid. p 165

¹⁰⁵Luke, D F. op. cit. p 82

The second is the good governance model which perceives development administration as an integral part of the policy-making process. In this model, policies are developed, refined, reformulated, tested and abandoned if need be in light of the experience gained previously from implementing them. Decision-making is thus a complex top-down/bottom-up process involving a variety of actors in the community.

Cause for accountable systems of government

If the second model is adopted, there are clear implications for the way information is used and managed. A top-down/bottom-up flow of communication is vital in building a responsive and accountable administration. Yet, in many developing countries decision making, communication of information and even the control of information sources have tended to be centralised at the top, thereby creating a barrier to the free flow of information. Information thus remains a significant missing link in the governance as well as development process.

Many scholars of political theory see this as a colonial legacy which has been perpetuated by independent nation states to the detriment of development. Not only have political and administrative bureaucracies in these countries failed to demonstrate accountability, most have been unable to provide for the basic needs of the people. These issues were among the reasons behind the second United Nations Development Decade, which lasted from 1971-81, and which was devoted to finding new

ways to managing the development process.

Three new trends were established during this Second Decade.

They were:

- the critical importance and need for responsible and accountable governance systems,
- the need for innovation, adaptability and flexibility in the planning and administration of development projects and programmes,
- the need to decentralise government functions that could not be managed effectively from the centre to field organisations, local administrative units and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The first two developments have broadly influenced development administration. Decentralisation, a more specific issue has been the subject of considerable study. Cheema and Rondinelli¹⁰⁶ describe decentralisation as a "multi-dimensional concept" constituting:

- the redistribution of administrative responsibilities within the central government from headquarters to field and/or local administration,
- the delegation of decision making and management authority for specific functions to semi-independent agencies such as

¹⁰⁶Cheema, G S, and Rondinelli, D A. Decentralization and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983, pp 18-25

- public enterprises, regional planning and area development authorities, multi-purpose and single-purpose functional authorities, and specific project implementation units,
- devolution to independent levels or units of government through the derogation of responsibility over specific functions and,
 - debureaucratisation or the facilitation of decision making through political processes that involve large numbers of political interests, rather than having decisions made exclusively or primarily by government through legislation, executive decree, or administrative regulation.

It has to be observed that irrespective of the form of decentralisation preferred, success is dependent upon a number of factors, including the nature of the political economy, inter-organisational relations, and above all, the availability of resources to facilitate policy and programme implementation.

Decentralisation cannot in itself be the solution to the many and complex challenges posed by the desire for responsive and accountable government. What is needed is to change the socio-political relationships which have hindered wider public participation in development planning activities, and which have promoted rather than checked the abuse of power by political and bureaucratic elites. As Conyers, Lecturer in the Institute of Planning Studies at the University of Nottingham and an ODA consultant on rural development in Zimbabwe observes, decentralisation can be seen as:

A way of increasing the effectiveness of development activities allowing greater flexibility in their implementation and providing a means of co-ordinating various agencies involved at the regional or local level and in this way facilitate a chain of accountability along the hierarchy of government.¹⁰⁷

3.5 The development crisis in Africa: its impact on governance

As far back as 1983, the World Bank recognised the growing crisis in Africa. In one of its publications it stated:

The disarray and ineffectiveness of sub-Saharan public administrations threaten development efforts of governments and undermine their ability to carry out basic governmental functions. Capacity to make and implement policy is reduced, revenues go uncollected, the little that is collected is poorly allocated and much needed public services are poorly or not provided. The engendered crisis of governmental administration is doubly serious at a time when structural adjustment programmes are requiring key central government institutions to plan and manage fundamental transformations in the economy.¹⁰⁸

The development and governance crises in Africa today have often been blamed on the patrimonial political and administrative systems which have prevailed in the majority of post-independent African countries. Mamadou Dia, Head of the Capacity Building and Implementation Support Division of the Africa Technical Department at the World Bank, explains that:

¹⁰⁷Conyers, D, "Decentralisation: the Latest Fashion in Development Administration?", in Public Administration and Development, Vol 3, 1983, pp 99-100

¹⁰⁸The World Bank. "A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa: Improving Effectiveness and Efficiency", Washington DC: The World Bank, 1983, p 2

...most successor regimes generally supported the concept of a strong, central government which would ensure economic equity to all citizens. Without the necessary checks and balances, this resulted in the emergence of highly centralised and all powerful patrimonial states.¹⁰⁹

With independence unable to satisfy rising expectations of the masses, the legitimacy crisis facing many post-independent African states worsened. As far as ordinary citizens were concerned, independence meant not just the transfer of power and authority to the African political elites, but also the transfer of wealth accumulated by the colonial bureaucracy. Mamadou Dia provides an apt summary of the situation by pointing out that "...independence created the unrealistic expectations of a centralised government accountable for abundant wealth distribution and for raising everyone's consumption and living standards to the higher European levels".¹¹⁰ He observes further that being aware of these demands and the growing frustration at not being able to cater for them, most African regimes became "persuaded of the need to assure ascendancy of the state over the civil society to strengthen their power and chances of survival".¹¹¹ Thus, the hegemony of the state was asserted not in the same manner as by their colonial predecessors, through coercion and conquest, but this time through a form of political manipulation.

¹⁰⁹Dia, M. "Position Paper for Improving Civil Service Efficiency in sub-Saharan Africa", Washington DC: The World Bank, Africa Technical Department, 1993, p 1

¹¹⁰ibid. p 7

¹¹¹ibid. p 7

Most post-colonial African governments adopted the single-party system as the basis for consolidating political power. In many cases, the constitutional frameworks which had been introduced at independence and provided for a multi-party democracy were changed, giving the single party absolute power over the control of the entire machinery of government, including the legislature and judiciary.

To gain control of the economy, once again, the concept of a strong centralised bureaucracy was evoked, with the promise of an equitable share of the "national cake" for everyone. But how was equitable distribution to be achieved with no attention being paid to mechanisms to guarantee state accountability? In particular, how could accountability be provided without sound records management systems which would provide verifiable evidence of state transactions? With record systems weakened and unable to provide the necessary evidence of abuse, those in power were able to gain total control over the reigns of power, including control of the economy, which they used to their own advantage, to promote "clientelism".¹¹²

Viewed in the wider context of current global developments, the crisis in Africa, as Mamadou Dia concludes, "assumes more significance when the civil service is required to play a central

¹¹²The term "clientelism" is used in political theory to refer to the existence of strong links between rulers and the ruled through reciprocity, rather than through formal political institutions. It is common in patrimonial political systems. For further information see Healey, John and Robinson, Mark. op. cit. p 167

role in planning and managing fundamental changes in the economy as part of structural adjustment programmes".¹¹³ Development agencies including the World Bank have suggested structural adjustment programmes and administrative reforms should be implemented as one solution to this crisis.

3.6 Potential role of records management in supporting accountability, decision making and development planning

...government managers are not, for the most part, used to having or using information, especially for forward-looking purposes. And on many issues, political pressures are often so great that data seem to be beside the point when decisions are made.¹¹⁴

This statement enunciates the attitude of senior administrators towards the use of information for decision-making. One of the fundamental objectives of administrative reform is making governments accountable and responsive to the needs of the wider public. Well-kept records play a major role in providing the evidence and the facts to support accountability and decision making in government. If public accountability is to be a reality, senior administrators will have to change their attitude about the way records are kept and information is shared within government and with outside agencies.

To demonstrate the extent to which any government remains accountable to its citizens, it must provide evidence through

¹¹³Dia, M. op. cit. p 1

¹¹⁴Osborne, D, and Gaebler, T. op. cit. p 359

record-keeping of what its actions and policies are. Rosemary Murray-Lachapelle, a leading Canadian archivist, endorses this view by observing that "records provide documentary evidence of government activity".¹¹⁵ In her view, a government record is "recorded information under the control of a government institution, regardless of physical form or medium, created, collected or received in the initiation, conduct, or completion of an institutional activity".¹¹⁶

Moreover, any government, through its ministry of finance and related agencies, has responsibility for the administration of public funds. The adoption of structural adjustment programmes and administrative reform programmes in Africa has increased the demand for systematic and more-stringent accounting and reporting systems. This has put further demands on government systems to maintain records that systematically document all its financial transactions. The same records are also required to facilitate the successful conduct of the audit process for accounting purposes.

However, in many developing countries the audit function carried out on behalf of the government by the Auditor and Accountant-General Departments is difficult if not impossible due

¹¹⁵Murray-Lachapelle, R. "Strategic Importance of Information Management to Government". Unpublished paper presented at the Caribbean seminar on "National Archives and the Challenges of Strategic Information Management", Trinidad, 28 March-5 April, 1995, p 4

¹¹⁶Murray-Lachapelle, R. *ibid.* p 4

to the unavailability of financial and accounting records, or simply because these records cannot be accessed easily. It is clear that systematic record keeping has not been fully appreciated even by those charged with the task of safeguarding the public trust. On the one hand this has facilitated the theft of public funds, while on the other it has called into question the commitment shown by senior officials towards the promotion of accountability and transparency in government.

Most government systems in developing countries generally suffer from weak systems in records management and are therefore not able to access information readily when required. Most African countries inherited European registry systems, which provide the basis for managing information but have not yet considered how these systems can be modernised to support administrative requirements. Registries continue to act as the custodians of records rather than facilitating accountability, decision making or even development planning by managing records to support user requirements. The inaccessibility of records and other categories of information underlines the urgent need to review this situation.

The role of records management and its potential impact on development activities has been grossly under-valued. If administrative reform is to succeed, it will have to incorporate records management as a mainstream activity of government. As

long ago as 1984, Jake Knoppers¹¹⁷ noted the vital contribution of information to development. Yet, while there has been a rapid increase in the emphasis on information technology, there is still a marked failure to recognise the management input required.

Rosemary Murray-Lachapelle believes the way forward lies in treating information as a resource and asset. She explains what is meant by the concept of "information as a resource". She states: "information is an asset that needs to be managed like human, capital, land, and other physical assets. In an information, or knowledge-based economy, organisations compete on the basis of their ability to acquire, manipulate, interpret, and use information effectively. Senior executives must begin to explicitly articulate and define the role information will play in the design of their business strategy".¹¹⁸

3.7 Conclusion

Administrative reform and records management share certain goals. Both are concerned with efficient, effective and accountable systems of government. However, in implementing administrative reform, it would seem neither the World Bank nor the other donor agencies involved in the programmes have

¹¹⁷Knoppers, J V T. "Archives, and Records Management as Components of Foreign Aid in Information Services". Comments prepared for the Ninth Congress of the International Council on Archives held in Bonn, Germany, September 1984, p 1

¹¹⁸Murray-Lachapelle, R. op.cit. p 1

recognised the immense benefits that could be derived if records management was incorporated as a key component in the administrative reform process.

Furthermore, very few governments, if any, in developing countries have accorded records or information management the same attention they have given to the management of other resources, notably finance and personnel. Ironically, efficient and effective financial and personnel management systems cannot be achieved unless they are underpinned by efficient records management systems.

The chapter concludes that it is in the interests of both the donor agencies and the governments implementing administrative reform programmes to include records management, which is a critical component of their success.

CHAPTER FOUR

BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYSIS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the concept of business process analysis and its application to records management and administrative reform. Although the concept has only recently been applied to records management, it has long been recognised by management practitioners as an effective means not only of analysing the way organisations function but also of determining the interrelationships between various component parts, systems, processes and activities within organisations.

The author argues that given on-going efforts to reform the public sector in most developing countries, business process analysis (BPA) provides an opportunity for restructuring records and information systems. Furthermore, BPA provides a vehicle for mapping information for restructured organisations.

Although the reform process involves a review of organisational structures and systems, so far records and information systems have not been restructured to provide a solid foundation for managing public sector information. Moreover, information systems have not been restructured to meet the objectives of the reform process.

In 1993, the Kenya Government initiated a functional review exercise which resulted in the reorganisation of ministerial functions. Yet there has not been a comprehensive or systematic review of records and information management systems as a basis for relating records to functions. Such a study would provide a framework for restructuring of information systems throughout the Government. In Uganda too, there has been a failure to link recordkeeping to functions. Despite a major review exercise leading to a reorganisation of ministry functions, this has not been linked to the records management programme being implemented in the public service.

4.2 Understanding business process analysis

To gain an understanding of the term "business process analysis", the study begins by defining the term "business process". Business process refers to those activities in which an organisation engages for the purpose of meeting its principal aims and objectives. According to Richard E Barry,¹¹⁹ formerly the Chief of the Information Services Division of the World Bank, and now a consultant, every organisation has a central purpose, which is its "core business process". An organisation must, first and foremost, fulfil this central purpose, before engaging in its other numerous indirect support services.

¹¹⁹Barry, Richard E. "Linking Information and Technology of Core Business Processes", in Menne-Haritz, Angelika (Ed.), Information Handling in Offices, Munchen: Saur, 1993, p 43

Business process analysis is, therefore, an analytic approach and a means of understanding an organisation. It analyses the systems and follows the business activities associated with each system. In so doing, it helps to establish the relationship between different systems and activities of an organisation and contributes in achieving the organisation's principal aims and objectives. Organisations need to have access to information in order to effectively implement core business processes. By applying business process analysis, organisations are able to analyse their information requirements for the purpose of fulfilling organisational objectives. Vicky Lemieux concludes that BPA is "an analytic tool that can be used to understand an organisation, its business processes and transactions as well as the information flows associated with those processes and transactions".¹²⁰

The concept of business process analysis is closely linked to the development of "systems thinking" in the early twentieth century, thanks to the pioneering efforts of biologist and philosopher Ludwig van Bertalanffy, logician Anatol Rapoport, philosopher-economist Kenneth Boulding, and sociologist Talcott Parsons. According to authors Peter Senge and Art Kleiner, systems thinking "encompasses a large and fairly amorphous body of methods, tools and principles, all oriented to looking at the interrelationships of forces, and seeing them as part of a common

¹²⁰Lemieux, Vicky. op. cit. p 4

process".¹²¹

Business process analysis shares many of the analytic characteristics of systems thinking which, amongst many other things, seek to enlarge our understanding of how systems work. Because of this kind of understanding, it is possible to diagnose problems and to propose solutions. Moreover, through this kind of analytic approach, systems restructuring is possible.

Systems generally have a number of common characteristics that are essential to the way they function. For example:

- systems consist of a number of functions that are dependent upon other functions,
- systems consist of processes which enable specific functions to take place,
- functions are related to and influenced by the systems structure,
- systems have capacity to evolve and are often influenced by the environment in which they operate.

By applying business process analysis or systems thinking to present-day organisations, we are not only able to understand how these various characteristics work together but also how different systems, processes, functions and activities may be restructured or integrated, enabling the organisation to operate

¹²¹Senge, Peter et al. The Fifth Discipline Field Book, New York: Doubleday, 1994, quoted in Lemieux, Vicky. op. cit. p 2

more efficiently and effectively.

Prior to the 1980s, business process analysis was largely associated with systems in the private sector rather than with those in the public sector. For many years, the private sector used business process analytic skills to diagnose systems deficiencies and to re-design and re-engineer business processes and transactions to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness. Public sector bureaucracies regarded the management skills used in the private sector as being of no relevance to the problems in the public domain.

Donald Savoie¹²² explains that it was the realisation sometime in the 1980s that "bureaucracy was broken and needed fixing" that prompted the shift in thinking and the subsequent adoption of business management models in the public sector. To signal this new approach in dealing with problems in the public sector, new business management terms came into use including "new public management", "entrepreneurial management paradigm", "re-inventing" or "re-engineering"¹²³ government and several others. In the 1990s, business process analysis and business process re-engineering are increasingly being adopted to the current efforts in most countries to reform and restructure the public service. As Vicky Lemieux explains:

¹²²A detailed discussion of Donald Savoie's contribution is provided in the literature review section in chapter one of this study.

¹²³A definition of these terms appears in the literature review section in chapter one.

Reform of the public sector involves, among other things, a dismantling of ineffective government bureaucracies and fundamental rethinking and redesign of large portions of, possibly even the entire, public service. This transformation process typically entails undertaking business process reengineering (BPR). BPR goes far beyond adjusting existing processes or making incremental changes that leave basic structures intact. It entails abandoning long established and often outdated procedures to look anew at the processes required to carry out government functions. Business systems analysis "provides the analytic framework needed to diagnose and develop strategies to solve organisational problems and redesign processes."¹²⁴

4.3 The link between business process and records management

All organisations, irrespective of size or status, and whether public or private, generate records and information in the course of transacting official business. This is besides other information received from external sources. A certain amount of this information is required to enable the organisation accomplish core business objectives. Records management endeavours to "manage organisational information so that it is timely, accurate, complete, cost-effective, and usable".¹²⁵

By investing in records management, organisations are able to:

- control the creation and growth of records,
- reduce costs associated with record keeping,

¹²⁴Lemieux, Vicky. op. cit. p 16

¹²⁵Robek, Mary F et al. Information and Records Management: Document-Based Information Systems (Fourth Edition), Ohio: Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, 1995, p 24

- improve efficiency and productivity in their operations,
- integrate information handling technologies into business operations,
- ensure compliance with government-imposed or statutory record keeping requirements,
- minimise the risk of litigation,
- safeguard vital information,
- support better management decision making and,
- preserve records of archival value.¹²⁶

It is no longer a question of whether better records and better information lead to a better business. Properly structured records certainly contribute to the success of the organisation. Nevertheless, records management is seldom an organisational priority. Robek et al attribute the failure to recognise the strategic importance of records management to the fact that it is "not the organisation's primary business and is, therefore, often relegated to secondary status in the minds of senior decision makers".¹²⁷ Thus, although record keeping is often considered an integral part of organisational activities and a means by which organisations preserve evidence of their various transactions, few organisations recognise records management as a major activity of the business process. Rarely are the objectives of records management ever considered as being part of the overall business aims and objectives of an organisation. The piecemeal approach adopted by most organisations towards records management undermines the value and quality of records as evidence.

¹²⁶ibid. p 24

¹²⁷ibid. p 15

Barry believes the problem stems from the failure to clearly articulate the relationship between business processes and records management. He proposes a proper integration of the two so that records management can effectively contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of every organisation's primary goals. A further advantage in closely linking business process and records management is that:

Business processes tend to remain relatively stable even when organisational structures change. It is seldom that an organisation changes its basic purposes. Business processes may be streamlined or some support services integrated with core business processes. But on the whole, the basic processes remain the same.¹²⁸

As early as 1948, Nobert Weiner wrote that "...any organism is held together by the possession of means for the acquisition, use, retention and transmission of information".¹²⁹ In exactly the same way, organisations rely on information to control their processes, maintain their stability and achieve their purposes. Without proper records, organisations are simply not able to function effectively, nor can they formulate, implement and sustain effective policies.

Despite the growing use of computers to create, process and transmit information in public as well as private organisations,

¹²⁸Barry, Richard E. Quoted in Menne-Haritz, Angelika (Ed.), op. cit. p 43

¹²⁹Weiner, Nobert. Quoted in Lemieux, Vicky. op. cit., p 2

much of the information required by most organisations is in the form of paper records. These must be managed efficiently and effectively through all stages of the life cycle to ensure their quality, relevance and integrity. But organisations must also begin to take seriously the consequences of computerisation by ensuring that information, whether in hard copy or electronic format, is properly structured to reflect organisational functions and activities.

4.4 Re-engineering records management and record keeping functions

The term "record" as defined by the Association of Records Managers and Administrators is "recorded information regardless of medium or characteristics".¹³⁰ Records are created or received and used by organisations in the course of transacting business. They provide the evidence of the transactions and of the business processes that an organisation engages in.

As most recent studies on records management demonstrate, there is growing realisation among records managers, archivists and the information community at large that there is a need to gain a better understanding of the role that recorded information plays in support of organisational business processes and that the means by which to do so is through business process analysis. Business process analysis facilitates a deeper understanding of

¹³⁰Robek, Mary F et al. op. cit., p 4

the business processes, transactions and activities associated with the creation, receipt and use of recorded information. It thus provides a basis for organising both the records and the information logically in ways that reflect work patterns in an organisation.

In one such study, Barry highlights four key questions that call for joint actions by records managers, archivists and senior managers in the public service in order to facilitate the re-engineering process in records and archives management. These are:

- determining how archives and records management processes fit into the business process re-engineering (BPR) of principal or so-called "core" business processes of an organisation,
- deciding whether archives and records management processes should be re-designed as part of the re-design of the core business processes of an organisation or,
- recognising whether they should be re-designed in their own right in the course of the document/records management environment (both electronic and non-electronic) that reaches horizontally across all organisational business processes,
- ensuring that information management and technology and archives and records management functions are fully integrated.¹³¹

The case for re-engineering records management and record keeping functions strengthens the argument for integrating records management processes with organisational business processes. Despite the difficulties that beset the resolution of

¹³¹Barry, Richard E. op. cit. p 43

the above issues, the logical way forward is by adopting a pragmatic approach that enables the restructuring of records management processes to take place within the context of the business aims and goals of the organisation.

It has to be remembered that organisational processes and systems, including records management, are inter-dependent. Although restructuring records management systems may result in records being effectively managed, this will not necessarily improve the organisation's other systems until these too are reorganised and restructured.

There is yet another reason for integrating records management with organisational business processes. Given that current public sector reforms are about evolving new ways and strategies of transacting public business, information has become critical in underpinning these goals. Barry notes that by forging closer links between record keeping systems and business process, public sector organisations stand to derive a number of benefits:

- an improved sense of organisational and managerial accountability within their internal systems and in their dealings with members of the public,
- a better return on information investments reflected in the performance of core business processes,
- easily visible trails of past actions and decisions,
- improved operational continuity that ensures minimum re-invention of wheels,
- easy access to relevant information including both current and non-current records,

- more responsible management of information in terms of information access, privacy and confidentiality.¹³²

What about benefits for records managers and archivists? A linkage between records management and the business process could lead senior managers to place more value on the role of these professionals and to appreciate their contributions to business goals and objectives. Furthermore, an integrated approach that looks at all the systems and business processes within an organisation is definitely a good starting point for integrating paper and electronic systems.

Seeking strategies for resolving these issues has become an on-going focus for new research in Western Europe, North America and Australia in recent years. A number of recent publications which include research papers, reports and case studies illustrate what is being done in various countries to resolve issues about the integration of records and information management systems with business processes, record keeping as evidence, and the recognition of information as a key strategic resource and asset in the public sector enterprise. The studies further illustrate the new alliances that are beginning to emerge between information professionals, including records managers and archivists, and senior public service managers. One such strategy is the Dutch Study "Revolution in Records".

¹³²Barry, Richard E. Quoted in Menne-Haritz, Angelika. op. cit. p 53

4.4.1 The Dutch Study "Revolution in Records"

In 1991 the State Secretary for the Interior unveiled a new records management strategy in the Dutch Civil Service in a document entitled "Omslag and Opslag" (Revolution in Records). The new strategy which was fundamentally different from previous policy had these key elements:

- that records management formed part of information resources management, and should no longer therefore be approached on the basis of separate rules and terminology,
- that information resources management, including records management, should be brought into line with the requirements imposed by the critical business processes of the civil service,
- that since different business processes had varying requirements, diversity rather than uniformity should henceforth be the hallmark of information resources management,
- that civil service managers responsible for particular business processes should also bear responsibility for the management of the information resources related to those processes.¹³³

The new policy strategy was prompted by a 1988 report from the Netherlands Court of Audit entitled "The Management and Conservation of Government Records". The Court of Audit, after comparing the existing regulations with guidelines for managing records, identified a number of problems which it noted, needed to be resolved. Among the problems identified were:

¹³³Waters, Peter and Nagelhout. "Revolution in Records: A Strategy for Information Resources Management", Ministry of the Interior, The Netherlands, 1994, p 2

- the vast quantities of records housed in government ministries (300 to 600 linear km) and substantial backlogs of un-processed records which could not be transferred to the state archives,
- inadequate instruments for managing the records creating process,
- poor discipline among civil servants, who because of negligence in storing original documents rendered central records incomplete and unreliable,
- the absence of a policy on the management of data stored on media other than paper,
- the low organisational status accorded records management staff, leading to high staff turnover and the recruitment of under-qualified staff.¹³⁴

The Court of Audit blamed the problems on poor discipline among civil servants, arguing that it had resulted in the failure to comply with existing regulations when creating records. Despite its recommendation that compliance with the rules and regulations be enforced, the project team had reservations noting that:

- it was pointless enforcing compliance with the rules unless users of records saw the point of the regulations or the prescribed procedures,
- tightening up the rules would be counter-productive and could easily lead to evasion,
- it was time a more practical approach was adopted which took into account the wishes and needs of the staff engaged in the organisation's critical business processes,
- every organisational unit in the civil service had an objective and a purpose of its existence and attention needed to be paid to both these objectives and the critical business processes.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ibid. pp 2-3

¹³⁵ibid. p 4

In its analysis, the project team further observed that the objectives and duties which underlined an organisation's business process together constituted its political mission. Performance of the duties resulted in products, and by assessing the products, it was possible to establish whether and to what extent an organisation's objectives had been met.

The team noted that records were created as a result of an organisation's critical business processes and not because of regulations or procedures. The records creation process was closely interlinked with the question of administrative support, hence, records management had to be seen in the wider context of core business process and in terms of its support in meeting organisational goals. A key element in "Revolution in Records" was thus the recognition that the information needs of users were paramount and that records management, in its supporting role, needed to evolve its working methods and procedures based on the requirements of individual organisational units and users in order to be relevant.

On the question of why organisations needed to preserve records, the study concludes that, first and foremost, information was required to fulfil an organisation's responsibilities. The second, and equally important, was the need to take account of the external requirements which an organisation had to fulfil. These range from the need for accountability in the public sector to the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage. Concerning accountability, the study

notes that:

The civil service cannot hide from scrutiny. Every government agency should be able to account for its activities, first to its superiors with the relevant ministry, up to the minister in person, who, after all, is accountable to parliament; second to the Court of Audit, which has both a right and a duty to scrutinise government activity to determine whether it is efficient and lawful; third, to parliament and, fourth, to the public, which has a right to know about the activities of the government and to call it to account for a particular decision.¹³⁶

Commenting on the obligation of public servants to preserve the cultural heritage, the study notes that public servants were often not aware of this requirement, or if they were they took little notice of it. Given this situation, records relating to the cultural heritage were particularly in danger of destruction.

The study recommends two ways in which the problem could be resolved. Firstly, it is necessary to make public servants aware that it is partly their responsibility to identify the requirements for the cultural heritage well in advance and to protect the relevant records right from the time of their creation. Secondly, the National Archives or such other agency must exercise responsibility by designating records which qualify for preservation at an early stage. In conclusion, the study notes that "information collected on paper and in electronic form is the record of government activity, and hence forms part of the

¹³⁶ibid. p 5

cultural heritage of a society".¹³⁷

4.4.2 The critical importance of records as evidence

In both Australia and Canada, initiatives to re-engineer records and archives management can be traced back to 1989. In that year, Terry Eastwood, a Canadian archivist and Chair of the Master of Archival Studies Programme in the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, challenged Australian and Canadian archivists to spearhead "an understanding of archives as arsenals of democratic accountability".¹³⁸

From then onwards, Canadian and Australian professionals have advocated that the records management concept should be broadened in relation to organisational business processes. Their main argument is that business process is the context in which transactions are carried out within an organisation, with records being generated as a by-product of that process. More importantly, they have called for a re-examination of the life cycle concept in records management, to take account of the evidentiary aspects of record keeping.

For many years, the life cycle concept was the dominant

¹³⁷ibid. p 6

¹³⁸Eastwood, Terrence M. "Reflections on the Development of Archives in Canada and Australia", in McKemmish, Sue and Upward, Frank (Eds.). Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Record Keeping, Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1993, p 36

principle in records management. When it was founded in the United States of America soon after the Second World War, archivists, as well as records managers, hailed it as the foundation of all records management principles, practices, methods and techniques. It provided a logical approach to the management and control of the physical record from creation, through maintenance and use, to disposition.

In 1986, Jay Atherton went on record to observe that the profession was beginning to witness "the gradual erosion of the life cycle model of records and the emergence of a continuum model."¹³⁹ In 1992, Frank Upward, an Australian archivist, information manager and scholar, again dismissed the life cycle concept claiming that Australian archivists no longer considered it relevant. He gave two reasons:

- firstly, because it paid no attention to the evidentiary aspects of record keeping,
- secondly, because of its narrow definition of the term "record", it paid no attention to contextuality or transactionality.¹⁴⁰

He therefore called for the replacement of the life cycle model with a unifying concept of the archival document based on

¹³⁹Atherton, Jay. "From Life Cycle to Continuum: Some Thoughts on the Records Management-Archives Relationship", Archivaria 21, Winter, 1985-86, pp 43-51

¹⁴⁰Upward, Frank. "The Significance of Bearman's "Simple Shared Goal" for Australian Records Managers", in McKemmish, Sue and Upward, Frank (Eds.), Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping, Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1993, p 230

the information continuum. He was of the view that this new model would encompass both records management and archives and that focusing attention on the continuum of the processes involved in managing the record of a transaction would protect its evidentiary quality. Despite this emphasis on replacing the life cycle model with the continuum model, in reality, these two models complement rather than contradict one another.

Another person who has greatly inspired the debate on the re-engineering of records management and archives in North America and Australia is David Bearman, editor of Archives and Museum Informatics, and an international consultant on electronics records management, archives, museum information systems and on descriptive standards. He is also a regular contributor and commentator on information resource management.

In an article entitled "Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records", presented at a gathering of Australian archivists in 1992, he outlines the fundamental issues underlining the current debate on re-inventing records management and archives. He shares the view held by Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish that the life cycle concept had failed to provide a satisfactory vehicle for integrating records management with the approaches in information resource management that had been developed since the 1980s. He proposes that an alternative model, which recognises the importance of organisational accountability should be developed.

His thesis is that organisations maintain records and information to provide for organisational accountability. He stresses that "accountability depends on being able to demonstrate managed access to information which is important for reasons of on-going need or future evidence, from the time of its creation".¹⁴¹

His examination of organisational accountability raises important questions about the nature of record keeping and what is needed to create complete, accurate and reliable records. He pays particular attention to the transactionality and contextuality of records and highlights the critical importance of records as evidence. Organisations need to preserve and protect records as evidence, first, by being able to articulate business application needs and spelling out the requirements for evidence, secondly, by safeguarding the continuity of the evidence.

Last, but equally important, he draws attention to a wide range of other important issues, including security, privacy, confidentiality, access and risk management, and to the need for integrating them with records management. He emphasises the need to focus attention on organisational functions, activities and transactions as a means of highlighting the critical role that records play in determining an organisation's life. He warns of

¹⁴¹Bearman, David. "Archival Data Management to Achieve Organizational Accountability for Electronic Records", in McKemish, Sue and Upward, Frank (eds.), Archival Documents: Providing Accountability Through Recordkeeping, Melbourne: Ancora Press, 1993, p 215

the need to be prepared to face the challenges posed by technology and computerisation by pointing out that:

Methods of communication within organisations are being rapidly, and radically, transformed as a consequence of the introduction of electronic, computer-based, communication technologies. It is now becoming evident that these technologies are not just providing a new method for transmission of information but changing the social character of the communication.¹⁴²

4.5 Implications for administrative reform

Business process analysis and records management are relevant to administrative reform in a number of ways. First and foremost, information must be effectively managed and made accessible to those who need it for the purpose of delivering services in the most efficient and effective manner. Secondly, well-managed records provide information that is reliable and authentic. Efforts to restructure public sector business processes should therefore encompass the management of records.

During the last one or two decades, a number of developing countries have embraced structural adjustment programmes, widely seen by the international donor community as the "ideal" mechanism for laying the foundations of good governance and stimulating social and economic development. Yet, these programmes hardly ever include a records management component. In many cases, the reforms have been implemented without the

¹⁴²ibid. p 216

participation of those responsible for the management of public sector records, as illustrated by the Civil Service Reform Programme being implemented by the Kenya Government.

So long as records management is excluded from the current restructuring of core business processes in the public service, problems of poorly structured record systems will persist, making it virtually impossible for public servants to locate and gain access to vital administrative, financial and personnel information necessary for them to carry on with their work and to deliver efficient services to citizens. Without access to the right information, government officials will find it extremely frustrating to implement structural adjustment and administrative reform programmes. Moreover, they will not be in a position to demonstrate accountability.

4.6 Conclusion

Ten years after Atherton's article "From Life Cycle to Continuum" was published, records management has steadily moved in new directions. Recent initiatives by developed countries to integrate records management with core business process is but one example of how rapidly the profession is being transformed. Business process analysis provides the analytic framework needed to re-invent records management in developing countries, making it more relevant to organisational goals.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PROGRAMME IN KENYA

5.1 Introduction

Kenya is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are undergoing public sector reform under the World Bank and IMF supported structural adjustment programmes. The reforms are essentially macro-economic, the main intention being to improve the country's economy and the Government's financial viability. However, they have also paid attention to some of the key actions needed in the restructuring of the public service. The reforms have therefore emphasised measures to reverse the progressive decline in efficiency and productivity, as well as strengthening capacity in the public service.

Records and information provide evidence of government transactions on a day-to-day basis and are therefore an essential component of the reform process. Unfortunately, neither records nor information management constitute a significant component of the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya. No comprehensive measures or significant policies have been developed to address records and information management issues. This chapter is intended to provide an overview of the developments in public sector reform in Kenya and to establish the linkage between these developments and records and information management issues. This will be followed by a more detailed examination of the records

management situation in the Kenya Civil Service in chapter six. Case studies are provided in chapter seven.

The chapter argues that given the implementation of administrative reforms in the civil service in particular and the public service in general, this would have been the ideal time for the Government to have brought records management into the reform process. However, as already demonstrated in the analysis in preceding chapters, and as will be shown in subsequent chapters, this was not done and a golden opportunity is being missed. Neither the Government of Kenya nor the donors have given much thought to the inclusion of records management as a vital component in the reform process. Although current reforms have focused on the measures needed to improve civil service performance and devolution of authority to the districts, they have not addressed important questions about the need to strengthen records management and the related information systems as the basis of support for decision making and of the development process both at the centre and at district level.

5.2 Organisation and structure of the Kenya Civil Service

The Kenya Civil Service is the operational arm of the Government, charged with analysis, recommendation and administration of public policy.¹⁴³ To implement public policy effectively and successfully, the Civil Service has to work hand

¹⁴³Kenya, Republic of. Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, Nairobi: The Directorate of Personnel Management, Office of the President, May 1992, p 1

in hand with elected officials. Like most other civil service systems in Africa, the Kenya Civil Service is a product of the colonial establishment. Kenya became a British Protectorate in 1895 and a colony in 1905; it remained under British rule until 1963, when it gained independence.

During this period, the foundation was laid for the establishment of bureaucratic and political institutions. These institutions were built around a strong centralised government system. Mnjama notes that in Kenya, as in most other British colonies, "all government business was centralised under the Chief Secretary until after the Second World War when this system was found to be deficient".¹⁴⁴ After the Second World War, there was a marked change in the way that colonies were managed. Mnjama notes further that "the British Government was determined to develop her colonies and the Empire as a whole through Grants-in-Aid under the Colonial and Welfare and Development Acts of 1940 and 1945".¹⁴⁵ The complex demands of post-war development and reconstruction provided the impetus for a reorganisation of Secretariat duties throughout the Empire. In Kenya, this took place between 1945-1946, with further measures in 1948.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴Mnjama, Nathan M. The Lyttelton Constitution and Kenya's Administrative History 1954-1957. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the Regulation for the Diploma in Historical Studies at Girton College, University of Cambridge, May 1987, p 4

¹⁴⁵ibid. pp 4-5

¹⁴⁶For further information see also Kenya Sessional Paper No.3 of 1945: Proposals for the Re-organization of Government, p 1

Following the reorganisation, the Membership system was introduced, which meant that some of the duties previously performed by the Chief Secretary as principal adviser to the Governor were divided among certain members of the Executive Council. Each member was placed in-charge of a group of related departments and became directly responsible to the Governor, rather than to the Chief Secretary, for both the policy and the administration of these departments.

In 1959, the departmental system was abolished and replaced with a ministerial system, paving the way for a cabinet system of government as independence approached. After independence, the Government embarked upon an on-going reorganisation of the civil service.

After nearly seventy years of colonial rule, the Kenya Government, like most other post-colonial governments, inherited a British model of administration that was already so deeply entrenched that it would require many years to change. British colonial administration was distinguishable by certain specific features including:

- a centralised administration with centralised decision-making in almost all policy areas: public finance, legal and judicial system, education, health, public works etc,
- a strong institution of a single dominating civil service,
- elaborate rules and regulations designed as a means of maintaining control over the decision-making process,
- a separation of central and provincial (regional) administration; and a separation of policy from

administration.¹⁴⁷

After independence, the aim was to introduce changes which would enable the administrative system to cope with developmental, democratic and other post-independence tasks, particularly in the light of the expansion of government activities and the adoption of a planned economic development programme.

The Government faced many challenges which ranged from the need to evolve strategies to deal with structural and organisational problems in the civil service to establishing effective channels of communication with various interest groups (including the political establishment, state and regional organisations and the private sector). In addition, it had to develop systems providing for effective supervision and service delivery in the civil service. Moreover, it needed to develop systems and policies to promote human resource development. As one development specialist has argued, administrative changes were urgently needed as the success of implementing the stated objectives depended, to a significant degree, upon the effectiveness and capability of the administrative machinery.¹⁴⁸

The Kenya Civil Service now became the executive arm of government responsible for the administration and execution of

¹⁴⁷Dwivedi, O P et al. "Imperial Legacy, Bureaucracy, and Administrative Changes: India 1947-1987, in Public Administration and Development, Vol 9, 1989, pp 253-254

¹⁴⁸ibid. p 255

government policies. Executive authority was vested in the President, who with his cabinet determined the general policy of the government. In exercise of this authority, the cabinet endorsed a system of government based on both central and local government (the latter comprising local authorities).

Despite various changes undertaken by the Government over the years, this basic structure continues to this day. One such change was the move towards the centralisation of administrative authority and power shortly after independence. Under the independence constitution, the country adopted a federal structure with eight regions (including Nairobi which was accorded a separate status comparable to a province), each having its own assembly and executive. In 1983, for example, the country had eight provinces and forty districts. In 1990, the number of districts rose to forty-seven, and in the last few years several districts have been split, raising the number to more than fifty. One study notes that soon after independence, there was a move toward centralisation of power which "soon led to a series of constitutional amendments that dismantled the regional system and reconstituted the provincial administration as subordinate instrumentalities of the national government".¹⁴⁹

Another major change was a review by the Government of the centralisation policy in 1983 as advocated by the move toward accelerated development in the districts. Following the review,

¹⁴⁹Nelson, Harold D (Ed.). Kenya: A Country Study, Washington D C: Foreign Area Studies, The American University, 1984, p 192

the Government unveiled a major new policy known as District Focus For Rural Development.¹⁵⁰ The policy represented a development strategy based upon the district as the focal point for development, rather than the headquarters of ministries and departments, which, being located in Nairobi had proved ineffective agents of development in rural areas.

The new policy required central ministries and departments to be effectively represented at the district level. Responsibility for planning and implementation of development projects in rural areas was to shift from the headquarters of ministries to the districts. To support improved district planning, District Planning Units (DPUs) were established under the supervision of the District Development Officer (DDO). Moreover, District Information and Documentation Centres (DIDCs) were to be established in all districts to serve as the information arm of the DPUs and to provide essential development information to the District Development Committees (DDCs). Although District Information and Documentation Centres have been implemented with some success in some districts, in others they have been a disappointing failure.

Today, the Central Government comprises 22¹⁵¹ ministries

¹⁵⁰Kenya, Republic of. District Focus For Rural Development, Office of the President, 1983 (Revised March 1987)

¹⁵¹This was in December 1993. Since then, the figure may have changed.

and a large number¹⁵² of departments. Government functions are grouped and divided among ministries and departments in three broad areas of work: (i) sovereignty and law and order (foreign affairs, defence, home affairs, and judiciary); (ii) economic and development (finance, agriculture, public works, transport, energy, industry and commerce); and (iii) social services and development (education, health, housing and culture).

Ministers are the political heads of ministries, appointed by the President, and exercise general direction and control over their specific ministries. However, day-to-day operations of the ministries are entrusted with permanent secretaries, who are usually senior civil servants and serve as the bureaucratic and administrative heads in their ministries. These functionaries, besides providing leadership and guidance in determining policies and objectives within their ministries, also ensure that government policies, objectives and programmes are implemented. Permanent secretaries are often people of independent influence, owing to the extensive knowledge and experience gained over the years concerning the inner workings of their ministries. However, overall supervision of the civil service, as the central agency responsible for the management and coordination of the government machinery is vested in the Head of the Civil Service, who is also Secretary to the Cabinet. Beyond the headquarters of ministries and departments, the work of the central government is organised on the basis of provinces, districts, divisions, locations and

¹⁵²The author's attempts to obtain a reliable figure proved unsuccessful.

sub-locations, collectively referred to as Provincial Administration.

In Kenya's provincial administration structure, the provincial commissioner is the senior executive, and below is the district commissioner, who is the chief executive in the district, responsible to the provincial commissioner. A district commissioner is assisted by a number of district officers, who are entrusted with administration at the divisional level. Below them are chiefs and assistant chiefs responsible for administration in locations and sub-locations respectively. This provincial structure is directly responsible to the central government and remains distinct from the local governing units called local authorities. These include municipal, county, town and urban councils, which provide a range of services from broad to narrow, depending on how effectively they are managed and also on their efficiency in collecting rates and utilising the revenues collected.

Even as African governments moved toward centralisation of administrative authority and power after independence, they also sought to support local government as a form of administrative decentralisation. R S Mukandala, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Dar-es-Salaam explains that "poor relations between the central authorities and the local population which existed during the colonial period caused post-independent African rulers to introduce various forms of modified decentralisation

measures".¹⁵³ He explains further that "though most post-colonial governments endorsed the colonial type of local governance at the time of independence, there were, shortly afterwards, a strong ideological desire to reform colonial structures through some form of decentralisation".¹⁵⁴

Mukandala's assertion that these measures would succeed in devolving power to the people at the grassroots level is controversial. Some scholars are of the view that post-independence decentralisation measures were primarily concerned with promoting central government administrative efficiency rather than empowering the people. Diana Conyers believes, for example, that the measures were aimed more at planning and implementing development activities than at increasing popular political participation. In the end, no real devolution of power was achieved. Instead, central government institutions tightened their grip on local government institutions, limiting opportunities for popular participation in development efforts.¹⁵⁵

Kenya's Civil Service has grown rapidly in size and complexity during the last thirty years. The Government attributes the growth mainly to a rapidly changing socio-economic and political environment and acknowledges that the growth has

¹⁵³Mukandala, R S. "Local Government and Local Government Elections", in The African Review, Vol 21, Nos 1 & 2, 1985, p 1

¹⁵⁴ibid. p 1

¹⁵⁵Conyers, D. op. cit. pp 99-109

been astounding. In a report on civil service reform, it concedes that "from a relatively small workforce of 60,300 at independence, the Civil Service grew at an average annual growth rate of 7.1 percent to its peak in 1991 of 275,283 civil servants".¹⁵⁶

In a parallel development, the number of central government ministries multiplied, from 19 ministries in 1971 to 23 in 1981, and to 35 in 1992. Equally, the number of departments and divisions increased from 148 to 550 respectively by 1992. During the same period, the Government created a range of boards and committees, which eventually acquired permanent status and structures.¹⁵⁷ This rapid growth of the civil service resulted in a decrease in its efficiency and effectiveness, making it a target and a priority for more urgent reform measures.

5.3 Background to the reform programme

Administrative reform has been used over many years by governments worldwide as a means for setting things in order whenever they are faced with problems affecting the smooth functioning of their civil service systems. Even so, government systems have sometimes been reorganised not so much to achieve major improvements in their functioning but simply to maintain the status quo or for political expediency. This has led to the

¹⁵⁶Kenya, Republic of. Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, op. cit. p 2

¹⁵⁷Ongwae, JEO. op. cit. pp 7-8

regular creation of a large number of reform bodies, commissions and committees. As Mohammad Mohabbat Khan explains:

It is a common belief held by bureaucrats that any reform or reorganisation measure undertaken in the public sector, provided it is implemented, will bring about a desirable change in the existing state of affairs by redressing the defects afflicting the civil service system or parts of it.¹⁵⁸

Certainly, this has been the case in Kenya.

Previous initiatives by the Kenya Government to review issues affecting both its core Civil Service and the public sector in general have led to the appointment of a number of commissions and committees to examine a wide range of issues. The majority of these initiatives have been related to pay structures, allowances and other benefits for civil servants and for other public sector employees. Rarely have they included measures to address structural problems such as those relating to the organisational set-up of the policy making organs within the government.

Yet, Kempe Hope, Professor of Economics and Finance at Daemen College, Amherst, New York (and formerly an economist with the World Bank) supports the view that current problems that afflict civil service systems throughout the Commonwealth are of a structural nature going back to the colonial days. He points

¹⁵⁸Khan, Mohammad Mohabbat. "Politics of Administrative Reform and Reorganization in Bangladesh", in Public Administration and Development, Vol 7, 1987, p 351

out that most post-colonial governments adopted and have continued to operate within a ministerial system that is characterised by distinctive purposes, loyalties and attitudes.¹⁵⁹ He holds the view that political independence failed to transform colonial administrative structures which were already so entrenched that the locus of responsibility for policy formation, decision making and executive authority merely shifted from the colonial governors and secretaries to political ministers.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, bureaucratic colonial administration became transformed into a bureaucratic organisation that emphasised the sovereignty of politics rather than the supremacy of administration.¹⁶¹ Attempts to follow a model of public administration based on the idea of a civil service that was politically neutral soon proved unsuccessful.¹⁶² More importantly, centralisation of policy formation and the decision making process have undermined co-ordination between sector ministries and departments in the conduct of national policy.¹⁶³

According to Jreisat, any significant reform and reorganisation in the civil service must address some or all of the following six objectives. It must aim to shake up an organisation, simplify and streamline its structures, reduce

¹⁵⁹Hope, K R. "The Administration of Development in Emergent Nations: The Problems in the Caribbean", in Public Administration and Development, Vol 3, 1983, p 49

¹⁶⁰ibid. p 50

¹⁶¹ibid. p 50

¹⁶²ibid. p 50

¹⁶³ibid. p 50

costs, symbolise priorities, improve programme effectiveness and improve policy integration.¹⁶⁴ The reform measures in Kenya have not achieved these objectives.

In order to understand the nature of the reform programme being implemented in the Kenya Civil Service and the contribution that records management could and should make, it is important to understand how the programme evolved. The present reform programme in Kenya was formally launched in August 1993. It was preceded by a number of sectoral reforms mainly in the agricultural, industrial and trade sectors. It is not clear why, in 1991, the Kenya Government agreed to demands by the World Bank and the IMF to implement a more comprehensive package of reforms. Two main hypotheses have been suggested. Firstly, it has been proposed that the Government had little choice but to adhere to conditionalities prescribed by the two institutions given the need to secure continued donor support in development aid. The Government's long established reliance on donor aid as well as a declining economy had rendered it vulnerable to donor conditionalities.

Secondly, there have been suggestions that the reforms were inevitable following World Bank policies developed during the 1970s which sought to limit direct state intervention in the economy and in development. These policies were later to be adopted by the conservative governments which came to power in

¹⁶⁴Jreisat, Jamil E. "Administrative Reform in Developing Countries: A Comparative Perspective", in Public Administration and Development, Vol 8, 1988, p 86

the United Kingdom, United States of America and Germany in the 1980s. The central issue of these policies was that the private sector should play a more significant role in economic activity in developing countries. In 1989, the World Bank issued a statement declaring that "Africa needed not only less government but better government - government that concentrated its efforts less on direct interventions and more on enabling others to be productive".¹⁶⁵

The donor community has consistently identified weak economic and public policies in African countries as the main causes of economic decline on the continent and hence the reason for structural adjustment programmes. While this is widely acknowledged, it may not be the only cause. Edward Breslin points out that the influence of powerful external factors should not be overlooked. He argues that the problem of weak economic policies and, by implication economic instability, did not begin in Africa or in developing countries. The IMF has dealt with macro-economic instability since 1952, when it first began providing short-term balance of payments support to member countries on condition that they cooperated in implementing sound economic policies. Between 1952-1970, IMF assistance was primarily to industrialised countries. The growing need for this kind of support led the IMF to establish the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) in 1974, as a means of providing resources for

¹⁶⁵Breslin, Edward. "Structural Adjustment in Africa: Engaging with the World Bank". An African Studies Seminar Paper No 308, presented at the African Studies Institute, University of Waterwitsrand, March 1992, p 4

longer-term adjustment needs. The disbursement period was extended from one to three years, and recipients were given ten years to repay the loan. Breslin notes that only in "1981 was assistance extended to correct imbalances in developing countries".¹⁶⁶

Breslin's point is that structural reforms are not unique to Africa since they were implemented in developed countries long before the need arose in developing countries. He sees the involvement by African countries in World Bank structural adjustment programmes as a justifiable means to "securing desperately needed resources".¹⁶⁷ He has this in mind when he declares, "this scramble for financial resources, and the concurrent dramatic increase in the acceptance of more ambitious SAPs is understandable given the resources limitations faced by African countries".¹⁶⁸

In contrast with the IMF, World Bank lending policies throughout the 1970s emphasised rural development and poverty alleviation, especially in developing countries. This was the case until the 1980s, when the Bank reviewed and modified its policies to embrace structural adjustment programme lending. Well aware of past failures associated with project lending, the Bank encouraged governments to provide an appropriate policy environment that was capable of stimulating development. This

¹⁶⁶ibid. p 2

¹⁶⁷ibid. p 1

¹⁶⁸ibid. p 1

change in policy marked the beginning of a fundamental shift in economic thinking from monetary to fiscal policy; a policy which has come to underline World Bank and IMF lending programmes in developing countries. Acknowledging this, Breslin observes that while throughout the 1970s:

the state had historically been seen as the appropriate agent for the disbursement of aid...by the early 1980s, this policy was seen as the fundamental constraint on development. This anti-statist approach, based upon an over-simplified interpretation of the role and effect of state intervention in developing countries, has characterised bilateral and multilateral development intervention throughout the 1980s.¹⁶⁹

Bade Onimode, an Economics Professor at Ibadan University, Nigeria, provides an alternative explanation to the economic problems afflicting Africa. He cites changes in the global economy as a major contributing factor to Africa's economic and governance crises. He points to the rise in global interest rates and the deterioration in commodity prices for African exports as some of the external factors over which Africa has no control. He predicts that Africa's position will be undermined even further following the emergence of powerful trading blocks in North America, the Pacific Rim and Europe. He sees these as "potentially destructive" given that they will lead to a further loss in export markets (and badly needed foreign exchange earnings) for African producers.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ibid. p 4

¹⁷⁰Extracts from Bade Onimode's forthcoming book, A Future For Africa: Beyond the Politics of Adjustment. The book is reviewed by Dr John P Tuman, in The Journal of Modern African

These factors and many more, including the international oil hikes of 1973-74 and 1978-80, a decline in the price of export commodities especially coffee and tea and worsening terms of trade combined to undermine Kenya's economic performance as they contributed to an overall decline in the country's balance of payments position. Despite Government initiatives to diversify the economy, it needs to do much more to stimulate domestic growth and protect the economy against external shocks.

Meanwhile, two factors, increasing fertility and declining mortality have contributed to the country's rapid population growth which averaged 3.8 percent by the 1980s and exceeded economic growth. The greatest impact has been on population under the age of 15 years and above 64 years. In 1991, the World Bank described the growth rate as "the highest in the World".¹⁷¹

The country's economy is primarily agro-based, and agricultural production has remained vulnerable to unfavourable weather conditions. In 1990, the main agricultural areas experienced inadequate and uneven rainfall, which adversely affected maize and wheat production. Although tea output and its value on the international market showed a marked improvement, the abolition of quotas under the International Coffee Agreement depressed coffee sales and reduced net benefits to farmers. Moreover, the industry faced organisational problems which

Studies, Vol 33, No 1, March 1995, pp 164-166

¹⁷¹The World Bank. Kenya: Re-investing in Stabilisation and Growth through Public Sector Adjustment. A World Bank Country Case Study, Washington D C: The World Bank, December 1991, p 2

frustrated and delayed payments to farmers. Overall, growth in the agricultural sector was undermined not only by these factors but by many others including the lack of inputs, inadequate incentives, and poor support services in extension, research, credit and marketing.

Thus, although Kenya's economy grew by about five percent from 1985 onwards, this was insufficient to create enough jobs for the country's young and rapidly growing population. Moreover, whereas in the past the public sector had accounted for almost half of all wage employment, providing jobs more readily to school leavers than the private sector, this trend could no longer be sustained as the Government faced new demands to implement economic reforms. Under the World Bank financed structural adjustment programme, the Government was required to fulfil three main conditions, namely to control public sector employment, reduce the wage bill and cut public spending.

The World Bank identified over-employment in the public sector and government subsidies to loss-making parastatals as the two main factors contributing to the decline in the Kenyan economy and undermining economic stability in the country. It went on to make three recommendations. Firstly, that a parastatal reform programme should be implemented, providing a mechanism to enable the Government to sell the loss-making enterprises to the private sector, allowing the latter greater opportunity to participate in economic activities. Secondly, that enterprises considered strategic by the Government should be restructured.

Thirdly, that the parastatal divestiture programme should be implemented in a transparent manner.¹⁷²

The emphasis on the role of the private sector and its important contribution to economic growth is fundamental to the economic reform programmes being implemented in Africa today. In most western capitalist economies, private enterprise tends to be perceived as the main engine behind economic growth, and private investment its most important element. This probably explains why the economic policies pursued both by multilateral and bilateral donors in Africa have tended to emphasize private investment. One argument often put forward by these groups is that capital generated through private investment often leads to increased national economic growth in the countries concerned as well as to overall growth in production in all sectors. Moreover, they point out that private investment facilitates the creation of more jobs in both public and private sectors.

Most African countries have thus been pressed to implement sectoral adjustment policies aimed at boosting private sector participation in economic activities. By 1990, the Government of Kenya had already begun to implement various measures demanded by the World Bank and other donors. The World Bank urged that the Kenya Government implement policies aimed at promoting a stable macro-economic environment. The policies demanded included mechanisms to control inflation, promote economic growth and ensure the availability of foreign exchange.

¹⁷²ibid. p xvii

The World Bank has identified excessive government regulation and lack of transparency as the two main obstacles to private sector investment in Kenya. It has therefore called for more targeted reform, directed more specifically at measures to provide an enabling environment for private sector investment.

These measures to reform the economy, the World Bank has argued, cannot be effectively met in the absence of administrative reforms in the public sector. A World Bank report submitted to the Kenya Government in December 1991 concluded that in addition to reforms in the economic sector, "structural adjustment in the public sector was necessary, not only because of the linkage with fiscal policy, but also because currently the sector absorbs resources which the private sector can use more efficiently".¹⁷³ It went on to state that reforms were urgently needed in the public sector in order to improve efficiency and productivity.

Acknowledging the need for reforms in the Civil Service, Kenya Government officials agree that the civil service is a complex organisation which needs to undergo constant renewal in order to adapt to new challenges of development and governance. They see administrative reform as a means of injecting new management practices in the Civil Service given its new responsibilities in a new environment of a liberalised market economy.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ibid. p 19

¹⁷⁴Ongwae, JEO. op. cit. pp 4-5

In 1992, the Government acknowledged in a major policy document that the Civil Service faced problems in five major areas: organisation structure, pay and benefits, staffing, personnel management and training, and financial management.¹⁷⁵ It recognised that civil service reform was urgently needed, primarily to help reduce the wage bill as well as the fiscal deficit. This was to be achieved through various means including downsizing, rationalisation of staff, functional reviews of ministries and departments and the strengthening of the District Focus For Rural Development Strategy.

The document set out the rationale for this action by stating that: downsizing in the Civil Service was to be linked to budgetary savings while rationalisation of staff and functional reviews of ministries and departments were to be related to securing an efficient structure, optimal size and staffing norms within various departments and cadres of personnel. Staffing levels were to be determined on the basis of functions and staffing requirements within set budget limits, and the pay structure was to be revised to attract and retain quality staff throughout the service.¹⁷⁶ The District Focus For Rural Development Strategy was to be supported to strengthen contacts between ministry headquarters and personnel in the districts.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵Kenya, Republic of. Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, op. cit. p 2

¹⁷⁶ibid. p 20

¹⁷⁷ibid. p 16

The document also defined the means of achieving change. In order to strengthen financial management in the Civil Service, the Government needed to significantly reduce wage-related expenditures while at the same time significantly increasing expenditure for the provision of public services ie Operations and Maintenance (O&M). Public sector investment programming was to be strengthened and accounting officers in the public sector were to exercise strict control in all financial matters including expenditure management, cash flow management, project design, capital investment and user fees management.

To complement these actions, the Government planned to introduce additional measures aimed at institutionalising mechanisms for the proper management of expenditure. These were to include installation of simple but effective computer programmes to assist ministries and departments to monitor financial aspects including cashbooks, direct payments, imprests, advances and transport. In addition, performance evaluation systems were to be introduced to develop individual performance objectives in line with those for organisational units, improve employee performance by measuring individual performance and refining and validating personnel techniques. The overall aim was to adopt objective policies in recruitment, placement, promotion, performance evaluation, training, salary, grading and discipline.¹⁷⁸

Recruitment controls were to be introduced. All new recruits

¹⁷⁸ibid. p 23

to the Civil Service were to be authorised and approved by the Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President in collaboration with the Treasury. Furthermore, the Government was to ensure strict adherence to guidelines in the schemes of service for recruitment, promotions, deployment, training and staff appraisal. Schemes of service were to be properly designed and implemented to provide well-defined career structures which facilitated retention of staff and enhanced technical and professional specialisation, training and staff development. Hopefully, this would eliminate anomalies in appointments, qualifications and career progression within the civil service and provide equal opportunity for advancement on the basis of merit in terms of work performance and audits.¹⁷⁹

5.4 Government efforts to reform the Civil Service

According to official sources, the Government has consistently reviewed its policies as part of the on-going process of civil service reform. James Ongwae¹⁸⁰ points to the various commissions, committees and task forces constituted by the Government on a regular basis to review various aspects pertaining to the performance of the civil service as clear evidence of its commitment to reform.

Since independence, up to six commissions and committees have been set up to examine the organisation and structure of the

¹⁷⁹ibid. p 25

¹⁸⁰Ongwae, JEO. op. cit. p 4

entire public service (civil service, public enterprises, local government and other decentralised agencies). These have included the "Prat Commission of 1963, the Miller-Graig Commission of 1967, the Ndegwa Commission of 1971-72, the Waruhiu Committee of 1979, the Ramtu Committee of 1985 and most recently the Mbithi Committee of 1990".¹⁸¹

The Ndegwa Commission confirmed the argument put forward in this study that the structure of the Civil Service was highly centralised and rigid. This had resulted in ineffective utilisation of human resources, little or no delegation of operational responsibilities, poor communication and lack of coordination, and over-centralisation of authority at ministry headquarters in Nairobi. The Commission proposed the establishment of a new management structure, based on management by objectives and organisation development.

Again, in the period 1964-1994, a number of task forces, working parties and groups were appointed by the Government to review certain specific aspects in the education sector. They included the Kenya Education Commission of 1964, the Wamalwa Report on Training of 1972 and the Gachathi Committee of 1978. Others were the University Grants Committee of 1981, the Working Party on the Financing of Higher Education of 1982, the Working Party on the Second University of 1982 and the Working Party on Education and Manpower Training of 1988.

¹⁸¹The World Bank. Kenya: Re-investing in Stabilisation and Growth through Public Sector Adjustment, op. cit. pp 37-66

Meanwhile, in the economic and development sectors, the Government has used more formalised channels to introduce reforms, review economic performance and, more importantly, to spell out its development goals and priorities. These formalised channels have included regular five-year development plans, sessional papers and other related policy documents such as the one on District Focus For Rural Development, to which this study has already referred.

These policy reforms, though well-intentioned, adopted a rather narrow, short-term approach to civil service reform and, therefore, contributed to the existing weaknesses in the structure, organisation and performance of the present civil service system in Kenya. It would seem that in the first three decades after independence, the Government perceived and equated administrative reform with policies that expanded rather than restricted growth and expansion in the civil service and throughout the public sector. In effect, the policies failed to take a long-term view of the civil service, and the various actions and measures accompanying them, though commendable, failed to alter or change existing organisational structures, processes and behaviour in the civil service. More significantly, they failed to improve administrative capacity to support efficient and effective performance of the civil service. Jamil Jreisat, Professor of Public Administration at the University of South Florida observes that such reforms often "lacked the specific operational objectives that guide and direct the design

of appropriate reform strategies and methods of implementation".¹⁸²

This failure to set long-term goals and develop appropriate reform strategies has contributed to a number of problems which have adversely affected the Kenya Civil Service. These are summarised as:

- rapid expansion of the Civil Service and of its functions,
- rapid growth in public sector employment, particularly in the lower, non-professional cadres,
- over-centralisation of decision making,
- decrease in productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in the whole of the public service system,
- lack of standards of performance, performance measures and work ethics,
- increased complexity of administrative procedures,
- lack of professionalism attributed to lack of incentive systems, lack of motivation, poor remuneration and limited focused training, duplication and lack of co-ordination in government work, policies and decision making processes.

They have also had important consequences for the way the Government handles its information. These include:

- unchecked accumulation of paperwork culminating in poor accessibility to vital information, slow decision making

¹⁸²Jreisat, Jamil E. op.cit. p 86

- and huge backlogs of non-current records in office space,
- inadequate structures, policies and procedures to support record keeping, information flow and the decision making process,
 - inefficient collection, classification, storage and retrieval of essential data.

5.5 Building capacity in records and information management

In the foreword to Mamadou Dia's A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa, Kevin Cleaver, Director of the Africa Region Technical Department of the World Bank observes that "the social and political upheavals and economic crises of post-independence in sub-Saharan Africa can be attributed largely to institutional and capacity weaknesses".¹⁸³ A few months earlier, Edward Jaycox, the then World Bank Regional Vice-President for Africa had described "capacity building as the missing link to African development".¹⁸⁴ In an address to the African-American Institute, he had noted that weak capacity had undermined macro-economics and project performance in Africa and called for a rethinking of the traditional approaches to civil service reform. The approach needed to be broadened to focus not just on short-term cost containment and retrenchment programmes but also to

¹⁸³Cleaver, Kevin M. "Foreword", in Mamadou Dia's A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa, Washington D.C: The World Bank, 1993, p vii

¹⁸⁴Jaycox, Edward V K. "Capacity building: The Missing Link to African Development". Address to the African-American Institute, Reston, Virginia, May 5, 1993

address other interests such as the long-term qualitative improvement in effectiveness and efficiency in the civil service. These sentiments by Cleaver and Jaycox confirm the official World Bank view that cost containment measures had neither achieved fiscal stabilisation nor efficiency despite heavy political and social costs.

In view of this past experience, the World Bank called for a new direction in civil service reform to focus on improved governance and greater transparency. It noted that improving governance had to begin with an assessment of the institutional environment (with emphasis on the key elements of governance ie accountability, rule of law, openness and transparency). "By adopting a broader or a comprehensive approach to reform, it was possible to effect structural and functional changes to correct distortions which affected the institutional environment as well as the performance of core government functions".¹⁸⁵

An important prerequisite to sound economic management and good governance is the enhanced capacity of government to formulate, analyse, implement and manage policies right across the administrative structure. This capacity can't be created without sound and effective records and information management systems. Although neither the governments nor donors fully appreciate the need to link government policy mechanisms and the information sector, the fact remains that information is a

¹⁸⁵Dia, M. A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa, op. cit. p 2

critical determinant of the pace of social and economic change. "A competitive market economy requires that economic actors have access to relevant, timely and reliable information. The less available or credible the information, the greater the uncertainty and risk, and therefore the cost of committing capital or labour".¹⁸⁶

In all countries, not only is government a primary source of information, it also sets many of the requirements for other economic actors and providers. The World Bank stresses that "information about the economy, about market conditions, and about government policies and intentions is central to private sector calculations, and is either provided by the government or greatly influenced by what it requires other entities to make publicly available".¹⁸⁷

In these circumstances, administrative reforms generally and civil service reform in particular have created a rare opportunity and a means by which governments world-wide are able to restore efficiency and strengthen the capacities of their public service systems so that they are in a position to provide essential services, and simultaneously foster accountability and transparency. Moreover, reforms are unlikely to succeed unless governments have access to all the essential information they require in order to carry out the desired changes. No government can claim success in implementing administrative reforms aimed

¹⁸⁶The World Bank. Governance and Development, op. cit. p 39

¹⁸⁷ibid. p 39

at introducing modern methods of organisation and efficiency, until it has improved its information handling capacity.

A greatly improved information environment could be of major benefit to the Kenya Government and to other governments in Africa. It would contribute to economic efficiency, transparency, and to analysis, communication and acceptance of policies proposed by the government. Such an environment could ensure that all relevant information and data about government economic policies and actions is made readily available to all economic actors, in the public as well as private sectors, including members of the public. It could also ensure that major economic policies and actions, for example, the budget or a decision about a major investment are taken in a transparent manner and are open to scrutiny by a wide cross-section of society.

The lack of transparency in decision making has in the past contributed to violent public reactions to government economic policies in several African countries. Today, it remains a significant cause of major disagreements between opposition parties and governments. A typical example is the controversy which followed the Kenya Government's announcement in 1995 of its decision to construct Eldoret Airport in Western Kenya. Parliamentary groups (ie the Public Accounts and the Public Investment Committees) as well as donors bitterly criticised the Government for the way it handled the project, accusing it of withholding vital information. Another example was the recent decision by the Kenya Government to end subsidies in University

fees which sparked off angry student protests. In both cases, a more open process of decision making, consultation, debate, public education, communication and sharing of information might have improved policy design and possibly facilitated public acceptance of the policies and actions. Moreover, the Government could easily have exonerated itself from blame by making available for public inspection and scrutiny vital documents and information about its actions.

The World Bank believes that greater transparency in policy making is important for economic efficiency for three reasons.¹⁸⁸ One, if the government's economic decision making is un-examined and un-contested (ie/^{not} subjected to public scrutiny), the dangers of corruption and diversion of public resources (including external aid) increase.

Two, closed decision making increases the risk of government error and the possibility of negative public reactions as indicated above. Government economic policies have a profound effect on the private sector through an array of influences: from monetary and exchange rate policy to taxation and expenditure policies. If decisions in these areas are made in relative isolation from private sector reactions, the likelihood of costly mistakes being made increases. A government could, for example, adopt fiscal policies that undermine rather than boost economic growth.

¹⁸⁸ibid. p 40

Three, the efficiency and effectiveness of economic actors, and the competitiveness of markets requires broadly-based access to relevant information. National economies now have to compete in a global economic setting in which those who have timely access to relevant information have the greatest advantage. The Kenya economy, which is heavily reliant on agricultural exports such as tea and coffee could benefit immensely from information about demand and pricing on the international market.

Unfortunately, in Africa, information remains a strategic but under-utilised resource, both for economic efficiency and public administration. Rapid expansion of the civil service in most African countries has resulted in a massive growth of paperwork, which is neither well-managed nor properly-utilised. Although donors now realise that there is a problem, their attitude seems to be that solutions can be provided through the introduction and application of computer technology, hence the growing emphasis on computerised information systems as a component of civil service reform.

In the last few years, donors have paid increasing attention to the improvement of personnel management information systems. In Kenya, "better methods of payroll administration and improved payroll control procedures" are currently being developed with assistance from the World Bank and the Overseas Development Administration to streamline what the Government describes as "bottlenecks in payroll administration and in the processing of

personnel data".¹⁸⁹ In Uganda, the Overseas Development Administration has funded a small pilot project, the Computerised Personnel and Management Information System (CPMIS) since October 1993, as technical assistance to the Government of Uganda. Implementation of the CPMIS project is being undertaken in conjunction with the introduction of a computerised payroll, regular staffing audits and head counts. Through head counts and comparisons between the payroll and staff lists, "the Government of Uganda has managed to cut by half the number of government employees from 320,000 to 148,000" between 1991 and March 1996.¹⁹⁰

However, it is unlikely that these measures will make a positive contribution to the information environment in Uganda or in other African countries unless they are linked to records and information management programmes. Firstly, the introduction of computerised information systems for personnel as well as financial management is presently being carried out in isolation from paper-based systems which have been used over many years for both personnel and financial management. Secondly, these measures should be linked to the overall efforts being made to improve the entire records and information environment in the civil service. Thirdly, projects to computerise government information systems have tended to be donor-driven, in which case, they often do not take full account of the different environment in relation to

¹⁸⁹Ongwae, JEO. op.cit. p 10

¹⁹⁰Cain, Piers. "Draft Report on a Study Visit to Uganda" in March 1996, International Records Management Trust, p 4

computer use and support.

If current computerisation programmes in the civil service are to succeed, adequate consideration will need to be given to a broad range of issues from data sources and legal and professional issues surrounding electronic records to requirements for both paper and electronic records. Moreover, adequate consideration will need to be given to the current poor environment for computer maintenance which currently applies in some African countries. Not only is the supply of computer hardware and software a problem in these countries, so too is the inadequacy of computer skills. Power supply is another major problem which will need to be given serious thought.

As part of the long-term solution to the problem of information management in Africa, there is a need to create a linkage between the current ministerial reviews which are being undertaken as a component in civil service reform with requirements for records and information management in the public service. One way in which this could be done is through "business process analysis", a management strategy discussed in chapter four. Although this strategy has only recently been applied to records management, it has long been recognised by management experts as an effective tool for analysing the way organisations function and of determining interrelationships between their various component parts, processes and activities.

According to Mamadou Dia, "one of the most critical needs

in African governance is improved access to better quality information".¹⁹¹ In order to achieve this, new organisational structures and management systems must be included as components in civil service reform.¹⁹² Moreover, a fundamental change in attitude and behaviour, especially in relation to decision making and delegation is required. He warns that merely resketching organograms and procedures may have little impact.¹⁹³

In chapters two and six, various observations have been made regarding the management of records and information in the Kenya Civil Service. Firstly, although the Kenya Government has made commendable efforts in supporting the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service in its role as custodian of public records, a more comprehensive policy mechanism embracing the management of records through their entire life-cycle is urgently required. Secondly, a properly structured and integrated records management programme is needed in the public service and, thirdly, a major restructuring exercise is required immediately in all registries in the public service as a core component of the on-going administrative reform programme.

Such a comprehensive and properly structured records management programme would provide the Kenya Government with the required capacity and the necessary means to control the growth

¹⁹¹Dia, M. A Governance Approach to Civil Service Reform in sub-Saharan Africa, op. cit. p 9

¹⁹²ibid. p 11

¹⁹³ibid. p 9

of records and information within the public service. Despite the growing use of computers to manage personnel and financial information, the volume of paper records has continued to grow, increasing the Government's reliance on paper records as its main source of information. Government operations too have become more paper-intensive. Although no study has been undertaken to determine the growth rate in the volume of paper in the public service in Kenya, it is more likely to reach 20 percent or more. This figure is a rough estimate based on similar studies in the United States where, studies regularly conducted in both public and private organisations indicate that most organisations experience about 10 percent annual growth on average despite their heavy dependence on technology. The studies also show that the cost of record keeping constitutes a significant percentage of the administrative overhead costs of running an organisation. Records management specialists estimate such costs to be in the range of US \$10-25 per year to store and maintain one linear inch of records in any business office.¹⁹⁴

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the administrative reform programme in Kenya and found that the present approach is inadequate in so far as records and information management issues are concerned. It has also found that the emphasis in the current reform strategies is geared towards securing fiscal stabilisation and not necessarily

¹⁹⁴Robek, Mary F et al. op. cit. pp 8-9

improving administrative efficiency and effectiveness in the public service.

The chapter concludes that in order to achieve this, the present programmes in Kenya and elsewhere must be expanded to provide a framework for managing records and information into the twenty-first century. The primary object of administrative reforms is to strengthen government capacity to facilitate efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and accountability of the governance process. This cannot be achieved unless the capacity of ministries, departments and other government agencies are empowered to manage paper-based records and, linkages are established with computerised information systems which are being implemented to provide operational, personnel and financial control in the public service.

Post-colonial governments in Africa have often clung to out-dated structures, systems and procedures in records and information management. This has seriously undermined public policy management and affected the quality of government decision making in all spheres: social, political and economic. Given this situation, the Kenya Government must urgently review existing policies on records and information management as well as implement a major restructuring exercise of its information handling systems to assure better management, dissemination and access to vital administrative and economic data. As already suggested, one way to achieve this would be through the on-going programme of functional reviews and rationalisation of ministries

in the Civil Service, which could be broadened to incorporate a review and analysis of information structures and file management systems as part of a registry restructuring programme.

CHAPTER SIX

RECORDS MANAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW OF PRESENT SITUATION IN THE KENYA CIVIL SERVICE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter extends the argument in section 2.4 of chapter two which provides a brief introduction to records management in Kenya. The chapter critically appraises the current situation of records management in the Kenya Civil Service. It focuses on five main themes: first, the state of records management in the Civil Service in the context of the on-going administrative reforms being implemented by the Government; second, the application of the life-cycle concept in records management; third, the development of archival services in Kenya and the impact this has had on records management; fourth, the legal and administrative framework required for records management and; fifth, the need for administrative support for records management, focusing on the central role of the Directorate of Personnel Management.

6.2 Present situation of records management in the Kenya Civil Service

Government, just like any other organisation, has three major resources at its disposal. These are capital, labour and information. Of these three, information (including records), despite being the most critical in providing the link between the

various administrative units and policy making mechanisms of any organisation, is the least recognised and utilised. This is because most administrators remain unaware of the potential benefits of records management to public administration and therefore continue to rank it lowly among organisational priorities.

In November 1985, Musila Musembi,¹⁹⁵ then Chief Archivist of the Kenya National Archives (and now Director of the Department) made the following observations which summarised the state of record keeping in the Kenya Civil Service at the time. He stated that poor records management in many government offices had resulted in reduced efficiency in the delivery of government services. Files were often reported missing or completely lost. Other files, especially the closed ones could not easily be traced either because there were no proper indexes, or simply because they had become mixed up with valueless materials. Consequently, decisions had been delayed, causing considerable irritation to action officers and to members of the public. In some cases, the quality of the decisions had been greatly weakened since action officers could not get the full documentation concerning a particular subject.

He added that many government registries were poorly managed and poorly staffed, and were sometimes used as dumping grounds for clerical officers who had failed in other areas. The

¹⁹⁵Musila, Musembi. The Role of Records and Archives Management in Public Administration, op. cit. p 2

situation was often worsened by lack of career prospects for registry personnel. Nathan Mnjama, in a recent study points out that "records management practices in Kenya are still emerging... Throughout the civil service and in parastatal organisations, there is widespread need to address the ways in which records are kept".¹⁹⁶

Ian Maclean,¹⁹⁷ who served as a UNESCO consultant for the Kenya Government during the period 1977/8, noted in his report that a proliferation in the objectives and programmes of the Kenya National Archives had rendered the department ineffective in carrying out its principal functions in the areas of archives and records management. Five years later, another UNESCO consultant, John Walford was to observe that "partly as a result of the proliferation of functions, which has diverted attention and resources away from essential functions...the KNA is failing to carry out both its essential and its non-essential functions effectively".¹⁹⁸ In a recent study carried out in 1990 to evaluate the functions of the Kenya National Archives, Ken Hall calls for a new concept of records management throughout the civil service in order to improve efficiency.¹⁹⁹ He also observes that the present approach pursued by the National

¹⁹⁶Mnjama, N M. Railway Records: Their Management and Exploitation in Kenya, op. cit. p 47

¹⁹⁷Maclean, Ian. op. cit. p 4

¹⁹⁸Walford, John. Review of the Kenya National Archives (Technical Report PP/1981-1983/5/10.1/05), Paris: UNESCO, 1982, p 6

¹⁹⁹Hall, Ken. Pilot Project on National Archival Networking - An Evaluation (FMR/IPS/UIS/108), Paris: UNESCO, 1990, p 10

Archives needed to change since it only concentrated on scheduling files for permanent preservation in the National Archives and seeking permission to destroy ephemeral material.²⁰⁰ This approach did not adequately provide for the management of current records.

Policies concerned with the control of public records in Kenya have been in existence for a long time. Attempts to develop such policies began well before Kenya achieved independence from Britain in 1963. Today, these policies are recorded in various forms of legislation, regulations and other kinds of official instructions issued by the Kenya Government. However, the emphasis before and after independence, has been on the management of non-current rather than current and semi-current records. As a result, records have not been managed as a key strategic resource of major significance for good governance, accountability and efficiency.

Delivering a keynote speech at a recent seminar on records management for permanent secretaries and directors of archives from Commonwealth African countries in Nairobi on 11th March, 1996, Mr Gaylord Avedi, a Permanent Secretary in the Kenya Civil Service and the Director, Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President highlighted the need to manage records and information as valuable resources. He noted that:

²⁰⁰ibid. p 17

Information management in general and records management in particular do play an increasingly important role in facilitating capacity building, administrative reform and democratization through providing a framework for organizing and preserving information in a manner that facilitates improved decision making, management accountability, transparency and access to public records.²⁰¹

This raises the question of whether the Kenya Government has developed a coordinated policy governing the creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records in the public sector. In other words, does the policy, if it exists, encompass all stages of the record's life-cycle? And whose responsibility is it to implement the policy? Does the existing archives policy ensure that current and semi-current records are effectively managed?

Numerous surveys undertaken by the National Archives through its record centres point to the need for a well-coordinated records management policy throughout the government to ensure that current and semi-current records are properly managed regardless of what their fate will be when they become non-current. With the majority of the reports depicting major weaknesses in the way records are managed right across the government, it is time that existing policies were reviewed, paying particular attention to the manner in which current and semi-current records are managed while still in the care of

²⁰¹Avedi, Gaylord, EBS, Permanent Secretary/Director, Directorate of Personnel Management, Kenya. "Keynote Address to the Seminar on Records Management for Commonwealth African Countries' Permanent Secretaries and Directors of Archives in Nairobi on 11th March, 1996, p 3

creating agencies. As the examples which follow will show, the mismanagement of records in government offices poses a serious threat to efficiency and remains a widespread problem in spite of efforts by the National Archives to improve the situation.

This is what two Kenya National Archives staff had to report following a visit they paid to the Registrar of Companies and Societies in Nairobi, a department in the Attorney-General's Chambers in October 1986:

A large part of the records are badly damaged by termites. Termites have recently invaded the storage areas virtually destroying whole files including party records belonging to the Kenya African National Union (KANU). The registry is overflowing with records and has no airflow. This registry was originally meant to cater for a given storage capacity and to provide a working area. However, today it is experiencing an explosive volume of files. There are no windows and the ventilations are blocked, creating an ideal environment for bacterial, fungal and virmin infestation. Some records are left on the floor while some are haphazardly shelved. The team advises that a registry maintenance programme should be started immediately since this would not require any additional funds.²⁰²

In March 1991, another team reported a similar situation following a survey of records in various district offices in Kericho District.²⁰³ One of the offices visited was that of the District Commissioner. It was found to maintain two stores for closed records. Because of previous contact it had had with the

²⁰²Kenya National Archives. Report on the Damage Caused to the Records of the Registrar of Companies/Societies, Nairobi: 31 October, 1986, pp 1-3

²⁰³Kenya National Archives. Report on Records Survey and Appraisal Exercise in Kericho District, 18-22 March, 1991, pp 1-6

Kenya National Archives, records in one store were properly arranged according to series. However, a second store housing semi-current records was found to also house derelict furniture, cement, building materials, ballot boxes and diesel. There was evidence of neglect in both stores as records had been left to accumulate a thick layer of dust.

The team also surveyed the District Agriculture Office. This Office had previously been surveyed and its records appraised by staff from the National Archives. Although disposal action had been recommended for certain categories of records and these records had been set aside, no effort had been made by the department to seek disposal authority. Gradually, the records had been incorporated back into the current and semi-current series, thus necessitating another appraisal exercise.

A survey at the District Lands Office revealed that the records were housed in three separate stores. In one store, the records were kept together with unserviceable equipment. In another store, the records were eaten by termites and rodents. Meanwhile, the District Labour Office had failed to dispose of ephemeral records although disposal authority had been granted many months earlier. Like the District Agriculture Office, the records had found their way back into the current series and had to be re-appraised. Similar weaknesses were observed in most other offices surveyed. The District Revenue Office, with only a few records, kept its records un-managed on the floor. The bulk of the records at the District Trade Office related to trade

licence applications dating back to 1969. These could easily have been disposed of earlier if only the department had known what to do.

These examples are typical of the situation which obtains in the public service as a whole, including the parastatals, and similar examples can be cited in virtually any area of the public sector. For example, a Kenya National Archives team filed this report following a visit to the Teachers' Service Commission to examine its accounting documents:

Upon inspection on 30th November 1994, the Commission's store at Development House was found congested with bound teachers' payrolls running into several thousands. These were stored on metal and wooden racks. Efforts had been made in the past to arrange the rolls according to chronological and serial sequences. This arrangement had since been disrupted. Our recommendations, subject to government financial regulations and accounting procedures, is that the payrolls spanning the years 1976-1986 should be destroyed.²⁰⁴

Another survey in January 1994 revealed records management problems at the Public Service Commission. These ranged from an acute shortage of storage space to problems in retrieving records and information due to the lack of lists, registers and indices that were up to date. It was also found that most of the records dated back to the 1960s and 1970s and should have been destroyed since they comprised mainly duplicate and triplicate selection board records, copies of Commission minutes and decisions, Kenya

²⁰⁴Kenya National Archives. Report on the Survey of Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) Records, on 30th November 1994, pp 1-3

Gazettes and many other obsolete records not warranting retention.

The policy of the Kenya Government with regard to records management in the public service derives, to a certain extent, from the recommendation made by Ian Maclean in 1978 that, no records management programme can succeed unless creating agencies play their full part in managing current and semi-current records. Musembi²⁰⁵ believes this recommendation formed the basis of the Office of the President Circular, Ref. No. OP.1/48A/66, of 28th November 1985. A section of the circular reads:

Your attention is invited to the provisions of Section 7 and 8 of the Public Archives Act Cap.19 pertaining to the destruction of public records and public archives. Destruction of public documents without proper authority is a serious matter which can result into loss of vital information and data...In the past, some important documents have been destroyed or lost through unsatisfactory record keeping practices. This situation must not be allowed to continue.²⁰⁶

In spite of the circular, which was copied to the Attorney-General, all permanent secretaries, heads of departments and chief executives of parastatals, apathy towards records management still persists and continues to be a source of frustration to staff of the National Archives as indicated in one

²⁰⁵Musila, Musembi. "Comments on Mnjama's Ph.D Thesis on the Records of the Kenya Railways Corporation" made on 30th January 1994, pp 1-4

²⁰⁶) Office of the President's Circular, Ref. No. OP.1/48A/66, of 28th November 1985, p 1

memorandum sent to the Director of the National Archives by staff of Nakuru Record Centre. Describing the deplorable state of the records at the Kenya Railways, Nakuru, they note that:

We feel awful and frustrated in our efforts to instil a sense of commitment to records management in the Kenya Railways, Nakuru. We urge you to spare no efforts at your end to impress upon the Kenya Railways Administration in Nairobi, of the need and importance to have proper records management enforced in their entire organisation.²⁰⁷

The cases which are highlighted above do not necessarily provide an objective representation of the records management situation in the civil service. However, they aptly illustrate the extent of records management problems within the public service which the Government urgently needs to address. There has been no systematic or comprehensive study in the public service to examine the consequences of these problems on public administration. The surveys undertaken by the Kenya National Archives provide the most reliable account available of what the records management situation is in ministries, departments, local authorities and parastatals organisations.

6.3 Application of the life-cycle concept

The ineffectiveness of many public sector agencies in managing their records, especially current and semi-current

²⁰⁷Memorandum sent to the Director, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, by staff of Nakuru Provincial Records Centre on 26th February 1993, concerning the state of the records of the Kenya Railways in Nakuru.

records derives, in large part, from their failure to embrace a life-cycle approach to records management. The basic aim of records management is to manage recorded information through its creation, maintenance and use to final disposition. Therefore, by adopting the life-cycle concept, organisations are able to ensure that information created in support of a particular mission or activity is effectively maintained and used or stored for future reference, and ultimately disposed of or transferred to an archives repository for permanent retention. For archivists as well as records managers, the life cycle provides a framework for managing recorded information irrespective of whether the information is current, semi-current or non-current.

Successful implementation of any records management programme has to begin by taking account of the organisation's structure and functions. The next step is to integrate the records management programme with the organisation's activities, taking into account the full life-cycle of the records generated by those activities. Senior management must be persuaded to provide the resources required to support the programme and must recognise that this is a valuable investment. Implementation of the programme must provide for its evaluation on a regular basis to determine whether it is meeting the organisation's requirements and contributing towards cost savings. Last but not least, those responsible for the programme must ensure that management experiences and is convinced of the programme's continuing value to the organisation.

Although records managers and archivists have one common goal which is record keeping, each group has specific aims and objectives in relation to different stages of the life-cycle. While records management focuses on the creation, maintenance, use and disposition phases of the records life-cycle, archive administration is concerned with the identification, preservation and provision of access to records of enduring value, a function which occurs at the end of the life-cycle. The life-cycle concept therefore provides the means by which these various stages of the records life-cycle are linked.

In many developing countries, the work of controlling the creation, maintenance and use of agency records remains the responsibility of creating agencies. Many are yet to adopt a life cycle approach to managing records as a valuable resource for public administration. Often, the situation is made worse due to the failure of the National Archives to play an active role with regard to setting standards, developing guidelines and procedures as well as providing enough leadership to address collapsed record systems.

Responsibility for managing the entire life cycle of records ought to be shared equally between agencies creating the records on the one hand and both record centres and the National Archives on the other. Agency staff should take responsibility for adopting good records management principles and practices to specific situations within their organisations. This involves determining file classification systems and participating in the

development of storage and retrieval systems. However, record centres and the National Archives should not wait passively until records are either semi-current or non-current before getting involved. Their involvement must come sooner rather than later.

Karen Dawley Paul believes such involvement at an early stage can be of great benefit to the National Archives as it gives it an opportunity to regulate the flow of records to the archives and to influence collection development.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, "a sustained interest in records creation and maintenance leads to the development of better archives by facilitating the diversion of valueless material from the archives and ensuring the preservation of valuable information".²⁰⁹ By "designating such records as they are generated, or soon after, archivists can encourage appropriate filing and indexing, better maintenance, and timely and accurate disposition".²¹⁰

Viewed in the Kenyan context, this raises a number of questions such as who is responsible for the records management programme in Kenya? Is it the Kenya National Archives or the Directorate of Personnel Management? Let us assume it is the National Archives, is this mandate clearly stated in the Public

²⁰⁸Paul, Karen Dawley. "Archivists and Records Management", in Managing Archives and Archival Institutions, edited by James Gregory Bradsher, Mansell Publishing Ltd, 1988 (Reprinted 1990), p 38

²⁰⁹ibid. p 38

²¹⁰ibid. p 38

Archives and Documentation Service Act? Moreover, does the Act give the National Archives the mandate to manage the entire life-cycle of records? In other words, is the National Archives in a position to influence the manner in which records are created, maintained and used prior to their transfer to the National Archives and does it have the resources to implement such an enormous responsibility? These issues are examined in the next sections.

6.4 Development of archival services in Kenya and their impact on records management

The development of archival services in Kenya is closely linked to the establishment of British imperial rule in East Africa. The first official records of British administration in East Africa were created following the declaration of the East African Protectorate in 1895. Kenya, then a British protectorate and a colony from 1905, had no official records other than those created by various groups, among them missionaries, traders and muslim scholars who paid frequent visits to the East African coast.

However, once the British administration was established and records were created on a day-to-day basis, the British Government, with a long tradition of keeping archives, was keen to ensure that the records were properly preserved. This concern was demonstrated in 1910 when Sir Percy Girouard, then colonial Governor of Kenya issued a memorandum on behalf of the Secretary

of State for the Colonies in London, emphasising the importance of preserving archives.

The memorandum instructed all provincial and district commissioners to ensure that all valuable records were selected for permanent preservation and valueless materials were destroyed at the earliest convenience, to avoid wastage of storage space and to facilitate easy retrieval of information.²¹¹ However, although the Chief Secretary issued several other memoranda on the same subject, the administration in Kenya made no effort to develop an effective records preservation and disposal programme. Thus, in spite of the British Government's policy urging that official records created in Her Majesty's overseas territories should be properly preserved, in Kenya the administration pursued a policy which appeared to tolerate rather than discourage the destruction of valuable official records. Colonial Office circulars sent from London urging the colonies to adopt appropriate measures safeguarding such records were often ignored by the local administration. No effort was made to establish archival services in the country until much later. By 1956, the authorities in Kenya had received five or six such circulars expressing concern about the preservation and disposal of official records.

One such circular issued in 1948 noted that in some colonial territories, the arrangement for sorting, storing and preserving

²¹¹Quoted in Musila, Musembi. The Role of Records and Archives Management in Public Administration, op. cit. p 1

official documents had not kept pace with the accumulation of documents no longer required for current purposes. It called for harmonisation in record keeping arrangements in order to safeguard documents of permanent value from destruction or loss.²¹² The circular urged the colonies to establish well-organised archival services and advised them to seek regular advice and practical assistance from London. The circular was issued as a follow-up to a memorandum by Sir Hilary Jenkinson on the state of colonial archives.

In 1956, the authorities in Kenya reacted by issuing Archives Circular No.1.²¹³ Based on the Grigg Report, the circular contained the most comprehensive measures ever to be announced in pre-independence Kenya on the management of records and archives. The circular noted that "any files which had been out of active use for less than five years should come up for a "First Review" before they were five years old, while those that had been out of active use for more than five years should come up for a "Second Review" as soon as they were 20 years old".²¹⁴

A number of developments followed. First, a post of archivist was created. Then, archival services were established in the basement of the new Central Government Offices (now Jogoo House "A") under a senior registry officer, Mr C D Bweye. These

²¹²Colonial Office Circular, Ref. No. 7020/47, of 11th March 1948

²¹³Archives Circular No.1, Ref. No. ARC(CGO)1/12, of 6th February 1956

²¹⁴ibid.

developments were short-term, as in 1961 the post of archivist was abolished. Musembi points out that the Government began by retrenching four out of the five clerks who formed the backbone of the archives service in 1959. Then in 1961, the archivist, Mr Bwe, retired, and the post he had occupied was combined with that of the Controller of Office Services.²¹⁵ The administration, however, maintained that the decision to curtail archival services had been caused by severe economic conditions which had affected the colony during the later part of the 1950s, forcing the Government to cut its expenditure. It further maintained that although the Government attached great importance to the preservation of its administrative records, this was not feasible under the economic circumstances that prevailed. Archival services would be developed when funds and personnel became available.

The attainment of independence in 1963 brought a marked change, as the post-independence African leadership in Kenya took immediate steps to revitalise archival services in the country. Arrangements were made to bring a technical expert from Britain, and Mr Derek Charman was seconded to Kenya as the Government Archivist in 1963. To most Kenyan archivists, these developments mark the real beginning of archival services in the country. Mr Nathan Fedha, the first Kenyan archivist, was appointed to replace Mr Charman at the end of his contract in 1965. The same year, the Government enacted the Public Archives Act (Cap.19),

²¹⁵Musila, Musembi. "Development of Archives Services in East Africa". Unpublished paper read at the 9th ECARBICA Conference, 6-7th November, 1986, p 8

formally establishing the Kenya National Archives Department.

The Public Archives Act (amended in 1990 to incorporate the National Documentation Service) empowers the Director as the head of the department, or officers authorised by him to "...take all practical steps to ensure the proper housing, control and preservation of all public archives and public records".²¹⁶ The Act defines records as including not only written records, but records conveying information by any means whatsoever.²¹⁷ It further proceeds to define public records as:

- The records of any ministry or government department, and of any commission, office, board or other body or establishment under the Government or established by or under an Act of Parliament,
- The records of the High Court and of any other court or tribunal,
- The records of Parliament and of the Electoral Commission,
- The records of any Provincial Council, Local Authority or other authority established for Local Government purposes.²¹⁸

What impact did these post-independence developments have on records management in Kenya? As Mnjama has accurately observed, the Kenya National Archives was to remain a relatively

²¹⁶Kenya, Laws of. The Public Archives (Amendment) Act, 1990, Nairobi: Government Printer, 1990, p 4

²¹⁷ibid. p 3

²¹⁸ibid. p 10

small department up to 1974.²¹⁹ During this period, the department experienced little growth in terms of professional activities, personnel and finance. However, with the appointment of Maina Kagombe to the post of Chief Archivist towards the end of 1974, staffing levels rose sharply from approximately 22 to nearly 200 within a period of about five years. This, however, did not improve the department's performance of its statutory functions.

Between 1975-81, Kagombe expanded the department's activities to include the collection of oral history and oral traditions, sites and monuments, an art gallery and a documentation unit. Under Kagombe's leadership, these activities received much greater attention than did basic archival and records management functions. For several years, much of the department's financial and personnel resources were directed to these non-statutory functions, while normal archival and records management functions suffered neglect. Performance of archival and records management functions continued to deteriorate until Kagombe was removed from the post of Chief Archivist in 1981, replaced by Musila Musembi. Musembi set about reorganising the department in August 1982, as was directed by the Government, following recommendations made by two UNESCO consultants, Ian Maclean and John Walford in 1978 and 1982 respectively.

The Department seized the opportunity created by the

²¹⁹Mnjama, N M. Railway Records: Their Management and Exploitation in Kenya, op. cit. p 45

reorganisation exercise to rectify past weaknesses. Firstly, concerted efforts were made to adopt a more systematic and planned approach in the implementation of archival and records management programmes. Secondly, the Department's main functions were restructured into three main divisions namely Archive Administration, Records Management and General Administration. Thirdly, all functions unrelated to archive administration or records management were abolished forthwith.²²⁰

As part of the new set-up, the Records Management Division assumed overall responsibility for the coordination of the records management programme in the public service as a whole. By the same token, it assumed the responsibility for implementing Section 4(1) (a) and (b) of the Public Archives Act, which empowers the Director, and any officer of the Service authorised by him to:

- (i) examine any public records, and advise on the care, preservation, custody and control thereof,
- (ii) require the transfer to his custody of any public records which he considers should be housed in the national archives.²²¹

Since 1982, the department has made significant contributions to the records management programme in government agencies. One such contribution has been the decentralisation of archival services to the provinces through the establishment of

²²⁰Director's internal memo: Reorganisation of Kenya National Archives, August 1982

²²¹Kenya, Laws of. op. cit. p 4

record centres. This decentralisation policy, which was first proposed by the National Archives in 1975 became a reality in 1980 and 1981, with the establishment of three provincial record centres in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kakamega. Soon after, the department announced further plans to set up two other record centres in Nakuru and Kisumu. As a result of the reorganisation of the department in 1982, the record centres came under the control of the Records Management Division. One officer in the Nairobi Records Centre describes the achievements of the records management programme introduced through the record centres as follows:

The programme has facilitated proper management and orderly and planned disposal of public records, while ensuring preservation and selection of valuable records needed for administrative continuity and planning of government business. Nearly every department to the district level has been covered by the programme throughout the Republic. In Nairobi 98% of all departments and ministries (with the exception of a few parastatal corporations) have been covered by the programme.²²²

These achievements by the record centres should not be underestimated or minimised. The record centres have facilitated the selection of records considered valuable, and made arrangements for their transfer to the National Archives. At the same time, record centre staff have actively provided guidance to public offices on procedures in the disposition of non-

²²²Questionnaire completed by Mr Rembe, Provincial Archivist, Nairobi Record Centre, on 15th May 1995.

essential records. In the sixteen years since the reorganisation, the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service with support of the record centres has done an excellent job in implementing Section 7 of the Public Archives Act which states that:

Where the Director is of the opinion that any public archives or records are duplicated, or that for some other special reason any public archives or records should not be preserved, he may, with the approval of the Minister and of such other person as the Minister considers to be primarily concerned with public archives or records of the category in question, authorise destruction or other disposal of such public archives or records.²²³

The other major contribution of the record centres has been the seminars they have offered for heads of departments jointly with the Records Management Division, with limited financial support from the Directorate of Personnel Management. The Kenya National Archives has used the seminars to create awareness among senior officers in government, particularly heads of departments and provincial and district heads, of their responsibilities in the maintenance and management of public records. The record centres have also organised regular workshops for registry supervisors and clerical staff to provide basic knowledge and skills in records management. These efforts have enabled the Kenya National Archives to maintain close contact with the majority, if not all, of the public offices throughout the Republic.

²²³Kenya, Laws of. Public Archives (Amendment) Act 1990. op. cit. p 7

Despite the Kenya National Archives' important contributions to the management of semi-current records, it has not been able to make a significant impact on the management of current records in the public service. This fact is widely acknowledged by archivists in the Kenya National Archives, especially those who deal with ministries and departments on a regular basis.

In response to a questionnaire circulated to senior archivists in the department, some conceded that the records management programme in the country had not succeeded in ensuring that records were effectively managed in all phases of the life-cycle. One archivist admitted that the programme was only effective in the semi-current and non-current stages. Another observed that the aim of the records management programme when launched in 1982 was to ensure that records were effectively managed in all stages of the life-cycle but that this had been undermined by the laxity of some public offices. A third explained that the main thrust of the programme had been centred on salvaging non-current records as the department recognised that this category of records faced the greatest risk of irresponsible destruction by creators. Still, another explained that a records management programme would normally be concerned with the management of records through the entire life-cycle but that in most of the public offices, records management work was left to junior clerical staff with little or no training. The Kenya National Archives staff were least involved in the creation and maintenance of current and semi-current records. However, their role was advisory and ministries and departments rarely

implemented their recommendations.²²⁴

These issues require Government attention at policy level and professional solutions must be sought as well. It is not the intention of the study at this stage to come up with solutions but only to highlight issues of urgent concern and to pinpoint the authorities responsible for such action. Three specific issues are examined here. The first issue is the question of training, experience, motivation and the support of senior officers for registry staff. Archivists and administrators are well aware that current records created or received in registries ought to be maintained there until they are either transferred to intermediate storage or the National Archives. Registries therefore have a duty to effectively manage current records by providing safe storage conditions, ensuring properly organised methods of records control and providing systems that facilitate efficient retrieval of information.

This demands that registry staff should have relevant training, experience, motivation and, above all, the support of senior officers especially departmental and district heads. Only in this way can issues discussed above be avoided, and deterioration in record keeping systems brought under control.

²²⁴Questionnaires were handed out to six senior officers in the department including the Director and his Deputy. They all completed the questionnaires making detailed comments and suggestions. Four of the six officers have been involved in records management work for a number of years and have had contact with creating agencies on a regular basis. They have had considerable experience dealing with records management problems in the field.

The Government must take the necessary action to solve these problems. It must, for example, consider providing a scheme of service for registry personnel thus creating a career path for upward mobility.

The second issue is the failure by the Government to come up with a standard registry procedures manual to guide registry supervisors and registry clerks in their day-to-day work. This issue must be tackled at both an administrative and professional level, probably through collaboration between the Kenya National Archives and the Directorate of Personnel Management. This type of guide is an absolute necessity in the civil service where staff recruited into clerical cadres have no training in records management work and no relevant experience in well run systems. Although the Government amended the Scheme of Service for Executive Officers in 1987, assigning them supervisory responsibilities in registry services, appointment to the Executive Officer post does not require any qualifications in records management or in a related field.

In a related move, in 1990, the Government introduced changes to the Proficiency Examinations, requiring clerical officers to be tested in certain aspects of archives and records management work. The Government expects them to have basic knowledge in records services including filing, classification, indexing and records disposal procedures. Although this is the case, clerical personnel hardly receive any training in these areas, and a registry procedures manual would be a most useful

instructional tool to have.

The last issue is the need for a records management policy in the country. This is another area where collaboration between the Directorate of Personnel Management and the National Archives is required. In 1978, Maclean made it clear that no records management programme could succeed without the involvement of creating agencies. An earlier attempt by the Government to implement Maclean's recommendation in 1985 failed to achieve the desired objective due to the lack of general awareness on the significance of records management. The Government, through the National Archives should consider introducing a more comprehensive policy on records management whereby ministries and departments, and indeed all public agencies will be required to take full control of their records before their transfer to the National Archives. Records management training needs to be provided at all levels and to all sectors within the Government as an essential component of the policy on records and information management in the public sector.

6.5 Legal and administrative framework for records management

Among the priorities of the newly independent government in Kenya was the establishment of a strong national archives service to take control of the nation's recorded heritage. In January

1965, the Government issued Archives Circular No.2²²⁵ to provide a legal as well as administrative framework for the young archives department. This circular was superseded a few months later following the enactment of the Public Archives Act (Cap. 19).²²⁶ The Circular, in particular, made clear reference to records management by noting that one of the key functions of the archives service was "to assist government offices maintain proper standards of records management by providing facilities for the custody, selection and disposal of non-current records".²²⁷ However, although the Government is to be commended for its action, the law was inadequate in providing for the management of records in all phases of the life cycle. Its emphasis was on non-current records. Three clauses in the Act provide the legal framework for records management in the public service.

- Section 4(1) (a)-(b) empowers the Director of the National Archives and Documentation Service to examine any public records and advise on their care,
- Section 8(2)-(3) warns against wilful destruction of public records and,
- Section 8(5) warns against wilful obstruction of officers of the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service in the conduct of their duties which include examination or inspection of public records to ensure proper care and preservation.²²⁸

²²⁵Archives Circular No.2, Ref. No. ARCH (CGO) 1/12, issued by the Vice-President, Hon. A Oginga Odinga, on 12th January 1965

²²⁶Kenya, Laws of. Public Archives Act (Cap.19), No. 32, of 1965.

²²⁷Archives Circular No.2, op. cit. section 3(i)

²²⁸Kenya, Laws of. op. cit. pp 4-8

As far back as 1978, the Government tried to address inadequacies in the law by commissioning a study by the Australian archivist, Ian Maclean, with terms of reference, which included:

- (i) drafting public records management legislation and regulations,
- (ii) planning and conducting staff training in records management...for both personnel of the National Archives Service and designated officials of other Government agencies.²²⁹

Maclean's report made specific recommendations to the Government on the need for an amendment to the Public Archives Act.²³⁰ The recommendations have yet to be implemented.

Meanwhile, Kenyan archivists continue to be divided over whether the Act provides sufficient legal and administrative framework for managing records through the entire life cycle.

Musila Musembi, Director of the Kenya National Archives is convinced that they do. He points out that the problem of records management is not with the current legislation. He blames failures to develop effective measures for managing records in the country on the colonial administration and on the Kenya National Archives' failure to deal with the records management problem early enough. He argues further that the culture of

²²⁹Maclean, Ian. op. cit. p 1

²³⁰See section 2.6 of chapter two for specific recommendations.

negligence towards records management is a problem that goes back to 1895, but which grew in scale over the years because of the absence of a central archival authority.²³¹ Moreover, "the other major factor which strengthened the culture of negligence is that the Kenya National Archives did not really wake up to pursue matters on records management in the public service until the 1980s".²³²

Nathan Mnjama does not agree with the view that the existing mechanisms are adequate. He blames the failures in records management on the Kenya National Archives' approach to managing records and on the inadequacy of the Public Archives Act.²³³ He proposes that the department needs to radically change its approach in order to "be responsible for the management of records as they pass through their entire life-cycle".²³⁴

Other officers, responding to the questionnaire, noted that some minor amendments are needed to the Act. Ichagichu Mwangi, Deputy Director of the National Archives feels that the current legislation is silent on the question of the role and responsibilities of public offices in managing records. He would

²³¹Musila, Musembi. Comments regarding "records management in Kenya" in Mnjama's Ph.D Thesis, op. cit. pp 1-4

²³²ibid.

²³³Mnjama, N M. Railway Records: Their Management and Exploitation in Kenya, op. cit. p 142

²³⁴ibid. p 152

like to see this component made more explicit.²³⁵ Margaret Mbogua, another archivist based at Nairobi Record Centre, wants to see a section introduced in the Act or through an executive circular, requiring ministries and departments to comply with recommendations made by the Kenya National Archives' survey/appraisal teams on the state of their records²³⁶.

This author takes the view that significant changes in approach and attitude are needed both on the part of the National Archives and the Directorate of Personnel Management in order not only to solve existing weaknesses in the archives and records management systems but also to be able to effectively deal with major new developments during this electronic age.

6.6 Administrative support for records management: principal role of the Directorate of Personnel Management

In chapter one this author has defined records management as encompassing: the policies, systems and both the professional and management techniques systematically applied to the control of recorded information to enhance an organisation's efficiency and effectiveness, while at the same time consolidating its evidentiary base. The success of records management in any

²³⁵Comments by Ichagichu Mwangi, Deputy-Director, Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service on 15th May 1995.

²³⁶Comments by Margaret Mbogua, Archivist II on 15th May 1995. Miss Mbogua is based at the Nairobi Record Centre and is an active participant in the records management programme.

organisation depends upon the recognition and support it receives from top-level management. As one records management expert once observed, successful records management programmes anywhere in the world are those which have received top-level acceptance by the "administrative" policy makers.²³⁷ Another prerequisite for its success is the availability of an appropriate establishment and trained personnel. However, as most archivists and records managers know from past experience, they rarely receive meaningful support in this area.

Senior management need to demonstrate support for records management through the establishment of a records management policy which requires administrative staff in ministries and departments to provide support for records management. It must also recognise the unique role of the National Archives in developing standards as well as providing professional records management advice to agencies in the public sector.

In the Kenya Civil Service, the Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM) in the Office of the President is the appropriate agency to set such a policy. The DPM has three principal roles, namely formulation of civil service policy; formulation of personnel policies and terms and conditions of service (including staff development); and, provision of advice, policy guidelines and assistance to the public sector concerning the above issues. Its other duties include provision of consultancy services in management, organisation and staffing,

²³⁷Maclean, Ian. op. cit. p 21

improved work methods, job analysis and evaluation and grading. To accomplish these objectives, the DPM works closely with the Treasury and with all other ministries and departments to ensure that programmes established in the civil service and throughout the public sector are of high quality and achieve overall optimum productivity.²³⁸

Several observations can be made concerning the need for DPM's support, and indeed overall government support for records management. Firstly, the administrative reform programme has created an opportunity which should be exploited by all the parties concerned. These should be the Office of the President, which has overall responsibility for the conception and coordination of the broad public policy issues,²³⁹ and its Directorate of Personnel Management, a key player in the formulation and implementation of the policy on public sector administrative reform in the country, along with the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, as the department charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the nation's recorded heritage. One option the Government could consider is placing the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service under the Directorate of Personnel Management. Besides strengthening the department's involvement in records management, by placing it within the main policy area of public

²³⁸Kenya, Republic of. Public Investment Programme, Office of the Vice-President and Ministry of Finance, April 1992

²³⁹K K Consulting Associates. Consultant's Report: Government of Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme: Mechanisms for Channelling Multi-Donor Funding. A Project Coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme, Nairobi: August 1994, p 7

administration, the move would reduce the possibility of a duplication in records functions between the department and the DPM. But even more important, records management is a cross-cutting issue which should be handled by an agency of central control rather than a sector ministry. In addition, there are security implications which make the management of records even more important.

A major policy document on Civil Service Reform issued by the Government in May 1992 describes the DPM's role as being that of "central coordinator and overall "champion" of reform, with responsibility for developing service-wide initiatives, and ensuring a consistent framework for reform".²⁴⁰ Still, another document describes it as being "in the centre in the conception and dissemination of policies and standards for effective civil service management".²⁴¹ Effective management in the civil service cannot be attained without an efficient, effective and respected registry system to receive, process, communicate and maintain the information throughout the government. This is not the case at the moment and the DPM is in a position to initiate this transformation.

Secondly, without the appropriate government support and investment in human resources and trained staff, registries are

²⁴⁰Kenya, Republic of. Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, op. cit. pp 28-30

²⁴¹K K Consulting Associates. Consultant's Report: Government of Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme: Mechanisms for Channelling Multi-Donor Funding, op. cit. p 7

unlikely to perform to the optimum standards required of them. Despite the introduction of a records management component in the Proficiency Examinations for clerical staff in 1990, at present training opportunities for registry personnel are limited. Moreover, the archives diploma courses offered at the Kenya Polytechnic are not tailored to the specific needs of registry management and therefore the few candidates that are selected to attend these courses do not acquire the necessary skills. Since one of the DPM's objectives is to "enhance and sustain the quality of training and other services through management consultancy and the provision of modern management techniques for desired organisational changes within government ministries and state corporations",²⁴² it needs to review the entire training policy for clerical staff and other records personnel in the civil service.

Thirdly, the DPM should use its administrative authority and influence to initiate a study on registry management throughout the Government to serve as the basis of a registry restructuring programme designed to make registries centres of excellence in managing government information as a strategic national resource and asset.

²⁴²Kenya, Republic of. Public Investment Programme, op. cit. p 209

6.7 Conclusion

The legal, administrative and professional considerations discussed throughout this chapter have a direct bearing on the management of recorded information in the Kenya Civil Service. As both the Kenya National Archives surveys and the research carried out by this author have shown, the poor state of records management in the civil service is caused by a variety of factors, among them, the lack of appropriate policies and procedures, adequately trained personnel and, above all, top-level support for records management.

The discussion has revealed that current records face the gravest risk due to the fact that existing policies and legislation, including the Public Archives Act, are mainly geared toward archival preservation, and ministries and departments have tended to see the maintenance of records from the perspective of archival preservation and not necessarily from the point of view of the strategic importance of information to the current needs of their own agencies and officials.

Registries which should be managing government information, are poorly managed and resourced, and a comprehensive study is needed in the civil service as a basis for the reorganisation and restructuring of registries and related infrastructures throughout the government. The Directorate of Personnel Management, jointly with the National Archives and Documentation Service, should introduce a comprehensive records management

policy, that will require ministries and departments to play a more significant role in the management of records prior to their transfer to the National Archives.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN THE KENYA CIVIL SERVICE: CASE STUDIES

7.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on three case studies namely the Directorate of Personnel Management (referred to as the DPM), the Civil Service Reform Secretariat (referred to as the Secretariat) and the Ministry of Finance (referred to as The Treasury). The case studies had two main objectives. Firstly, they provided a means of examining the record keeping practices adopted by Kenya Government agencies in the creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records. Secondly, they were a means of exploring records management policies and practices in the public service and the extent to which these affected the management of records as a tool for effective public administration. These objectives were only partially realised for reasons which are explained below.

The main limitation was the poor cooperation accorded the author by some senior officials in the three agencies studied. He was not permitted to conduct record surveys or to observe record keeping systems in the registries of the three agencies for reasons that are documented in chapter one. This made it impossible to verify information obtained through the interviews and questionnaires. This experience reinforced the widely-held

notion that in many parts of the Government, records management still occupies a low priority.

Despite the obstacles, the author managed to gather a considerable amount of information through interviews and questionnaires and by analysing two reports on records management in the DPM and the Secretariat. The reports had been compiled by the Management Consultancy Services Division (MCSD) of the DPM a few months prior to the field study. The reports appear to demonstrate the Kenya Government's support for records management. However, the attitude by some senior officials toward the research raised doubts about the level of commitment in the public service toward records management in particular and information management in general.

This attitude is surprising during an age of government "reengineering" and "downsizing", when the need to utilise resources more efficiently and effectively is a challenge that faces all governments, developed and developing alike. Among those resources is information. As records management studies in North America, Australia and the Netherlands have shown,²⁴³ the trend is towards linking records and information management with organisational functions and business processes and with decision making, efficiency and accountability. Although none of these countries can claim to practice effective control of records at all phases of the life cycle, efforts are being made with good

²⁴³Some of the studies referred to here are discussed in chapter four of this thesis.

results.

This chapter seeks to reinforce the main argument of this thesis that unless records are well-maintained and properly-organised, administrators can neither perform their duties effectively nor provide efficient services to either the government or the public. It is thus in every government's interest to ensure that a systematic and properly coordinated records management programme becomes part of its governmental system. Such a programme could benefit the Kenya Government not just in the area of policy formulation and implementation but also by underpinning current reforms in the public service.

7.2 Background and context of the Case Studies

The case studies are provided as a vehicle for exploring in context the various issues raised in the preceding chapters of this study and to highlight specific records management problems which continue to be experienced in the public service in spite of the on-going administrative reform programmes. The three agencies studied were selected on the basis of their important role as regards the conception and implementation of public sector reform policies and programmes.

A fundamental objective of the reforms is the revitalisation of the public service. Current thinking by the donor community as well as the Kenya Government is that successful implementation of the on-going structural adjustment programme will be difficult

to achieve unless an efficient and effective public service system is developed and sustained. Yet as one recent study carried out under the auspices of the UNDP²⁴⁴ indicates, the present public service system in Kenya has been characterised by major weaknesses which seriously undermine the Government's capacity in relation to policy formulation and implementation, management of public finances and provision of basic public services.

The UNDP sponsored study cites rapid expansion of the public service and the Government's increased stake in parastatals in the 1970s and 1980s as factors which put pressure on the national economy and contributed to a decline in public services and efficiency in the public service. By late 1980s and early 1990s, it had become obvious that the Government had to do something to arrest the deteriorating situation.

The Government agreed to implement the World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programmes but soon realised that if these measures were to succeed, it had to implement administrative reforms in the public sector too. The reforms would provide the necessary support for structural adjustment programmes and for economic recovery and growth. It also realised the need to "restructure and to reorganise the roles and responsibilities of ministries and public institutions so as to perform within the parameters of a liberalised economy, free market forces and trade

²⁴⁴The study referred to here was carried out on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) by K K Associates. See citations in chapter six of this thesis.

regime, with the imperative emergence of a strong private sector".²⁴⁵ Moreover, the Government would have to improve the "management of the delivery of public and social services during the implementation of the reforms with the imperative decentralisation of decision making and participation in the policy making process, in line with the democratisation of public administration and institutions of governance".²⁴⁶

The study carried out by K K Associates on behalf of the UNDP notes that by implementing the reforms, the Government hoped to achieve "greater effectiveness, professionalism, quality and motivation"²⁴⁷ in the running of the public service. The study concludes that "the launching of the Civil Service Reform Programme was thus the culmination of an acknowledgement by the Government that the Civil Service was inappropriately organised and under-employed primarily because of overstaffing, low salaries, sub-optimal working conditions and consequently low morale".²⁴⁸ Certainly, the claim had some justification, as in 1992 the Government went on to publish a major policy document unveiling the Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵K K Associates. op. cit. p 3

²⁴⁶ibid. p 3

²⁴⁷ibid. p 3

²⁴⁸ibid. p 3

²⁴⁹The document referred to is the Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, issued by the Directorate of Personnel Management in May 1992. Citations of the document appear in chapters five and six of this thesis.

The study blames inefficiency and weaknesses in Kenya's public service on the complex organisation, structure and functions of the central government. This had been made worse by overstaffing, especially in the lower cadres of the Civil Service, which increased the Government's wage bill and affected the provision of public services ie Operations and Maintenance (O&M). Likewise, the management of recurrent expenditure was adversely affected. As a result, expenditure on Operations and Maintenance compared with expenditure on personal emoluments declined from 18 percent in 1981/82 to 14 percent in 1986/87 and to 12 percent in 1990. This trend seriously affected Civil Service efficiency and productivity.²⁵⁰ The study goes on to note that these factors had affected the "capacity of the Civil Service to such an extent that provision of quality and cost effective public services could no longer be guaranteed without major improvements in policy management and comprehensive reform of the Civil Service".²⁵¹

7.3 Case Study One: The Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM)

7.3.1 Structure and functions of the DPM

The DPM is a department in the Office of the President. It is headed by a Permanent Secretary who is also the Director of Personnel Management. It comprises four major divisions, each

²⁵⁰K K Associates. op. cit. p 3

²⁵¹ibid. p 3

reflecting a specialised function. They are: Management Consultancy Services Division (MCS D), Manpower Development Division (MDD), Finance Administration Division (FAD) and Personnel Administration Division (PAD).²⁵²

As indicated in chapter six, the DPM has multiple functions within Kenya's Public Service. These range from the formulation of public service policy to the conception and dissemination of policy and standards for effective management in the public service. DPM's other key function is the formulation of policies on personnel matters. According to one MCS D Report:

The DPM plays an advisory, consultative as well as regulatory role and issues policy guidelines and service regulations on all matters related to personnel management and administration. Its major functions are, among others, to formulate and maintain personnel policies, standards, rules and procedures governing the conditions and terms of service, interpretation of rules and control of establishments in ministries and departments; identification of training needs and translation of those needs into training programmes; introduction of modern management techniques; conducting organisational studies and surveys and drawing schemes of service and career guidelines for organisations in the public service.²⁵³

Its other major responsibility is the coordination of all training programmes for public servants. Since becoming independent, "the Kenya Government has put a lot of emphasis on

²⁵²"Report on the Administrative and Managerial Practices in the Kenyan Civil Service", p 12. The report is by MCS D, dated May 1994.

²⁵³ibid. p 12

staff training and development".²⁵⁴ It considers training "a vehicle through which greater efficiency and productivity can be realised in the public service, thus, making the civil service more responsive to the challenges facing the nation".²⁵⁵ Initiatives to develop a training policy were began by the British Government prior to independence as a way of equipping Kenyan administrators with relevant skills and preparing them to take over from the colonial administrators.

In the post-independence period, various civil service review committees appointed by the Kenya Government have similarly put a lot of emphasis on the need for training in the public service. For example, the Adu Committee (1964), the Ndegwa Report (1970-71) and the Waruhiu Report (1979) all underscored the importance of training in achieving productivity and the need for clear training policies and objectives based on the needs of the civil service to ensure the actualisation of national objectives.²⁵⁶ Following recommendations made by subsequent review committees appointed by the Government to review civil service salaries, the DPM was mandated to monitor the implementation of all training programmes.²⁵⁷

DPM's other major responsibility is establishment control,

²⁵⁴ibid. p 2

²⁵⁵ibid. p 2

²⁵⁶ibid. p 3

²⁵⁷ibid. p 3

which entails creation and abolition of posts.²⁵⁸ In order to meet this objective, the DPM relies on the MCS D to conduct organisational studies and surveys in various ministries, departments and parastatals to determine, inter alia, personnel requirements. Because of the current administrative reforms in the public service, the Government has imposed very strict controls on establishment in the public service as a way of controlling government expenditure. This has meant that the DPM has to liaise closely with the Treasury, since the latter is responsible for maintaining strict control over ceilings on personal emoluments. The DPM on its part has to maintain personnel statistics including a nominal roll and complement control records which are essential for establishment control. Finally, with the inauguration of the Civil Service Reform Programme in 1993, the DPM's role has expanded to include the formulation, implementation and coordination of the policy on administrative reform programmes. It maintains a close working relationship with the Civil Service Reform Secretariat.

7.3.2 Records management in the DPM

According to Susan Diamond, "records typically have a four-stage life cycle, the first of which is creation, when pen is put to paper, data is generated by a computer, or information is captured on film, or any other medium".²⁵⁹ The provision of

²⁵⁸ibid. p 8

²⁵⁹Diamond, Susan Z. Records Management: A Practical Approach (Third Edition), New York: American Management Association, 1995, p 1

registry services, whether in centralised or decentralised form is an essential requirement in streamlining the way in which records are created, maintained, used and disposed of in any organisation. The study found that the DPM maintained two registries, one open and another secret. Both registries served all the four main divisions of the DPM ie Personnel Administration, Manpower Development, Management Consultancy Services and Finance Administration.²⁶⁰

Although the author could not obtain permission to conduct a survey of the registries, an earlier survey conducted by the MCS D on the DPM's records management system highlighted a number of weaknesses. For example, the Report indicated that the registries experienced common records management problems which greatly hampered the flow of information to senior management. The Report further identified specific problems which the organisation needed to address. They included:

- non-existence of file control procedures which rendered file movement control and file tracking highly inadequate and inconsistent,
- non-existence of written guidelines and procedures to regulate the creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records,
- delays in filing of correspondence resulting in huge backlogs,
- delays in retrieving and tracking of files,
- regular misfiling of correspondence which caused delays in information retrieval,

²⁶⁰"Report on the Organization of Records Management Systems of the Directorate of Personnel Management", p 2. The report is by MCS D, dated June 1994

- regular loss and misplacement of files which caused inconvenience and annoyance for both users and the registry personnel,
- non-existence of a registry manual or handbook hence the absence of guidelines on filing procedures.²⁶¹

Others were:

- inaccurate labelling and titling of files resulting in misfiling,
- laxity by registry staff in ensuring that individual folios of correspondence and all accompanying enclosures are properly numbered to facilitate retrieval of information,
- laxity on the part of registry staff in ensuring that all new correspondence is strictly checked and matched with existing correspondence already on the files to prevent misfiling or the creation of duplicate files,
- failure by senior management to demonstrate support for records management in general and registry work in particular,
- lack of recognition and support for registry staff by senior executives and line managers,
- lack of relevant training for registry personnel in records management work and,
- lack of a records management policy in the DPM.²⁶²

Information gathered by the author through questionnaires administered to officers of various ranks in the DPM largely confirmed the Report's findings. One of these officers was Mr John Wachira,²⁶³ Head of the Management Services Division of the

²⁶¹ibid. pp 1-27

²⁶²ibid. pp 1-27

²⁶³It took several visits to make an appointment with Mr Wachira. However, once this was done, he willingly agreed to fill in a questionnaire. It is the procedure for making appointments with senior officers like Mr Wachira which is cumbersome and bureaucratic. One has to go through several vetting processes

DPM, a unit responsible for overseeing the management of registries in the public service. He conceded that the Government as a whole experienced problems in the management of its records and information. He gave the example of the DPM which relied heavily on the availability of relevant information to coordinate personnel matters, promote human resource development and optimise productivity of the civil service.

He noted that because information was not always readily available when required, this inevitably affected the quality and timeliness of the decisions made. Similarly, poor management of personnel information contributed to long delays in processing personnel claims, particularly during this time when the Government was keen to speed up implementation of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme.²⁶⁴ Mr Wachira, however, noted that the Government had already taken measures to correct the situation by initiating a review of records management systems in selected agencies which included some state corporations. The reviews were being undertaken by the MCSD as an aspect of the Civil Service Reform Programme.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mr Gaylord Avedi, Permanent Secretary and Director, Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President who noted that without well-managed personnel information or a reliable database of the

before getting to the secretary to make an appointment.

²⁶⁴Similar views were expressed by Pauline Hayes (ODA). See section 8.6 of chapter 8 for details.

workforce in the public service, there was no way the DPM could perform its functions or fulfil its obligations as required by the Government. The DPM's duties, which ranged from management consultancy work to manpower development and to personnel and finance administration depended on the availability of various kinds of information and data. In order to execute these functions, the DPM had to have information on human resource organisation, human resource planning, human resource budgeting, human resource information and human resource utilisation in the whole of the public service.

Inadequate information in any one of these areas could undermine current efforts to build staff capacity in the public service. The Government expected the DPM to carry out studies in various sectors of the public service and to provide accurate and reliable data on a variety of personnel issues including staffing capacity, personnel management and training, pay and benefits and financial performance and productivity. Meanwhile, the Government had already taken measures to enhance the availability of information in the DPM by establishing a personnel management information system. The system had improved the storage of information and facilitated the provision of reliable and timely information for planning purposes. In addition, it had immensely benefitted government decision making in the area of personnel management.

The Supervisor in-charge²⁶⁵ of the DPM's open registry enumerated a number of problems which commonly affected registry operations and undermined efficiency. These ranged from deployment of inexperienced staff in the registry to lack of training and motivation. He noted that experienced staff were regularly transferred from the registry only to be replaced by those with little or no experience. Moreover, the situation was made worse by the fact that registry staff rarely received training in either registry work or records management. He gave the example of his own registry with a total staff complement of 12 comprising 1 executive officer (EO), 2 executive assistants (EA), 2 higher clerical officers (HCO) and 7 clerical officers (CO). Yet only one HCO had attended a records management course lasting three weeks at ESAMI (Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute), based at Arusha, Tanzania.

He blamed the poor performance in registries partly on the negative attitude among some senior officers coupled with lack of cooperation among secretarial staff. Some action officers had a tendency of holding onto files indefinitely. Some went to the extent of locking them in their cabinets, only to deny knowledge of them later. It was common practice for these officers or their secretaries to transfer files to their counterparts without bothering to inform the registry. In such circumstances, the registry only learned about the missing files when other officers

²⁶⁵I am grateful to Mr F O Ndege of the DPM who kindly arranged with this Supervisor to fill in a questionnaire and a survey form. I am also grateful to Mr M N Malonza for his contribution.

requested them.

7.4 Case Study Two: The Civil Service Reform Secretariat

7.4.1 Structure and functions of the Secretariat

The Secretariat was established in 1993 following the inauguration of the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) earlier in the same year. The Secretariat which falls under the DPM is headed by a Programme Director who is responsible to a National Steering Committee (NSC). The Chairman is the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Public Service. The Permanent Secretary/Director, Directorate of Personnel Management is the Vice-Chairman. The Secretariat is answerable to the NSC through the Permanent Secretary/Director, Directorate of Personnel Management. Below the Programme Director are two Deputy Programme Directors and a team of experienced officers responsible for planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling the activities of the Secretariat.²⁶⁶

Under the current CSRP, an integral part of the structural adjustment programme (SAP), the Government's broad objectives are to "enhance public service performance, make government more efficient, improve the quality of services, improve partnership with the private sector, make management more effective and

²⁶⁶"Report on Registry Management System of the Civil Service Reform Secretariat", p 5. The report is by the MCSD, dated July 1994

improve the management of finance and the economy".²⁶⁷ To demonstrate its commitment to the structural adjustment programme, in 1991/92 the Government introduced stringent measures aimed at "containing wage expenditure since the wage bill had a destabilising effect on the fiscal deficit and therefore the economy as a whole".²⁶⁸ This was followed by the establishment of the Secretariat in 1993 as a vehicle for implementing specific programme objectives, namely:

- Civil Service reorganisation and rationalisation of ministerial and departmental functions,
- rationalisation of staffing levels in the public service through downsizing, early retirement schemes, strengthened establishment controls, improved manpower planning and better management of the payroll system,
- pay reforms through salary reviews and rationalisation of salary grades, allowances and benefits,
- improved personnel management and staff development and training,
- improved financial performance management involving management reviews and staff development.²⁶⁹

7.4.2 Records management in the Secretariat

The Secretariat had no registry services until July 1994. Soon after its establishment in 1993, the Secretariat's initial task was to implement the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme

²⁶⁷"Report on the Administrative and Managerial Practices in the Kenya Civil Service", op. cit. pp 1-24

²⁶⁸"Report on the Registry Management System of the Civil Service Reform Secretariat", op. cit. p 3

²⁶⁹"Report on the Administrative and Managerial Practices in the Kenya Civil Service", op. cit. pp 13-14

(VERS), which involved the processing of thousands of VERS application forms. Hundreds of folders were created in which the forms were held. Since the Secretariat did not have a registry to store the folders or the other ministerial and departmental records in its possession, they were stored in the Office of the Programme Director and in various other places until a registry could be established.

This arrangement could not be sustained for long because of the rapid accumulation of the records. Therefore, on 28th March 1994, the Secretariat wrote to the Permanent Secretary/Director, Directorate of Personnel Management, asking the MCSD to carry out a study to determine the Secretariat's registry management requirements and to lay the groundwork for the establishment of registry services. The MCSD submitted its report in July 1994 recommending that "a registry management system be established and an organisational framework should be adopted by the Secretariat to facilitate accountability, control and coordination of registry services".²⁷⁰ The Report sets out proposals on the type of records management structure the Secretariat should adopt.

The author was able to get two senior officers from the Secretariat to take part in the research, the Programme Director

²⁷⁰"Report on the Registry Management System of the Civil Service Reform Secretariat", op. cit. pp 6, 11

and his Deputy.²⁷¹ Like in the two other case studies, the author was not given access to the registry or to other members of staff. However, the two officers' contributions and responses to the questionnaires were most helpful. They made it clear from the beginning that, as representatives of the Secretariat, an agency charged with implementing the reform programme, their contributions were to focus more broadly on the impact of records management on the reform programme in the public service as a whole rather than limit themselves to the Secretariat which had only recently established a registry and embarked on a records management programme. A summary of their contributions is provided below.

The Government specifically established the Secretariat as the agency responsible for the Civil Service Reform Programme. Under the Programme, limiting the fiscal deficit was a top priority. In the past, the public sector wage bill had continued to rise, putting pressure on the national economy. Among the measures to contain the situation was the introduction of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS), which was to be implemented by the Secretariat. One of the main tasks of the Secretariat while implementing the VERS was to decide the staff to be retired or retrenched. In order to do this, it had to have reliable data about staffing levels and staff distribution in all ministries as well as districts.

²⁷¹Senior officers at the Secretariat are constantly out of the office on official duty. Because of this, it took several weeks to make contact with Messrs Ongwae and Mujera and to obtain contributions from them.

The Secretariat staff were well-aware that inadequate personnel records could lead to inaccurate decisions and similarly to inaccurate calculations of retiree benefits. Consequently, this could either entail losses to the Government or the retirees. They were also well-aware that the lack of accurate and reliable records made it impossible to effectively deploy personnel. They noted that the on-going retrenchment programme in the public service could serve as a good illustration of the importance of records management in the operational functions of the government. The slow pace of personnel attrition (retirement) in the public service was partly a result of delays in information collection and retrieval in the ministries. In many cases, the information collected was either incomplete or not completely accurate and therefore unreliable. This delayed decision making.

The capacity of the Government Computer Centre at the Treasury to process personnel information also contributed to the unsatisfactory state of personnel data management in the public service. Although the Government relied on the Centre to process all personnel and financial information generated within the public service, the computer system in use was old and slow. This meant that personnel data required for management decision making could only be released once every quarter, meaning that information could be three months out of date. In addition, the system lacked the capacity to capture personal data relating to academic qualifications, which is essential for staff deployment. The information had to be processed manually resulting in

unnecessary delays and errors.

The Secretariat staff stressed that the Government was already seeking a solution to the problems affecting the operations of the Government Computer Centre. However, the author would like to point out that these solutions are likely to remain short-term unless the Government is willing to carry out systematic research on the management of paper-based information, especially personnel information, in relation to computerised information systems. The introduction of computerised technology to developing countries entails major consequences for public administration, yet there has been little research to determine its full implications. The solutions must involve not just computer systems analysts but also records and information managers.

As recent case studies undertaken in Uganda and Ghana by the International Records Management Trust (IRMT) illustrate, many lessons could be learned by comparing experiences in different African countries or even other developing countries. The case studies point to the fact that some of the problems experienced in implementing the Computerised Personnel Management Information System (CPMIS) in Uganda and the Integrated Personnel and Payroll Database (IPPD) in Ghana could have been avoided had systematic research and adequate preparations been carried out. According to Piers Cain, the IRMT officer who carried out the case studies, the most persistent and vexing problems of computerisation in Africa consist of a combination of issues which range from

technical to data sources and competency in computer applications.²⁷²

On the issue of records management, the two Secretariat officers noted that poor records management contributed to flawed decision making in the public service and often resulted in a wastage of vital resources. Moreover, poor records management undermined manpower planning, budgetary planning and development planning. It also undermined staff performance appraisal in the public service since no consistent data on the performance of individual officers was available. In the case of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme, the lack of complete personal information on retirees contributed to delays in making payments of retiree benefits.

They noted that if records are not well-managed, wrong decisions could be made which could cost the Government dearly through under-utilisation or mis-allocation of government resources. For this reason, the Government continued to review and to up-date information systems in the public service as a means of improving decision making. Lately, it had introduced a unique personal identification number (PIN) for all civil servants and revised Pay Change Advise forms to ensure correct data entry into the payroll. These measures would also make it

²⁷²A detailed discussion of these issues is provided in the following two reports by the International Records Management Trust - Personnel Records: A Strategic Resource for Public Sector Management - Uganda Case Study; and Personnel Records: A Strategic Resource for Public Sector Management - Ghana Case Study. Both reports are still at a draft stage in November 1996

more difficult for ghost employees to get on the payroll and thus drastically reduce the Government's wage bill.

Although the contributions by the two officers show that the Government has taken a keen interest in the improvement of information management in the public service, not enough is being done to improve records management, without which effective information management cannot be achieved. As Mr Mujera, the Deputy Programme Director at the Secretariat observed, efforts to improve records management in the public service will first of all have to deal with the a number of issues. These are:

- take steps to improve registry filing systems,
- take a keen interest in developing registry physical facilities,
- provide records management training for registry personnel and senior managers in the public service to make them appreciate the value of records and information,
- develop a scheme of service for registry personnel designed to provide motivation and to encourage them to remain in the service and,
- improve information storage and retrieval through the provision of computers.

7.5 Case Study Three: Ministry of Finance (The Treasury)

7.5.1 Functions of the Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance is primarily responsible for the development, implementation and coordination of the country's general economic policy. This function is achieved through collaboration with various agencies of the Government but primarily with the Ministry of Planning and National Development. Its specific functions include determination of fiscal and financial policy in the public sector, management of foreign aid and technical assistance, control of government expenditure, mobilisation of revenues and coordination of the policy on private foreign investment. It is also solely responsible for the coordination of the economic adjustment and the sector adjustment programmes, and, has since 1993 been represented on the National Steering Committee responsible for the policy direction of the Civil Service Reform Programme.

It is the only Government agency that has statutory authority to negotiate and sign for external loans and grants on behalf of the Kenya Government regardless of the ministry, department or parastatal implementing the project for which money has been allocated. It has responsibility for obtaining Parliamentary authority for all external borrowing. Therefore, it liaises with various donors with a view to determining the type of loans available, policies and conditions of the loans, as well as negotiating and signing for loan agreements and

various kinds of funding and technical assistance grants. The ministry must also ensure that externally funded projects are included in the budget process.

The ministry has several departments through which its responsibilities are executed. These include: Fiscal and Monetary, Budgetary, External Resources, Accountant-General and Internal Audit. Of the five, only two departments, External Resources (referred to as ERD) and Budgetary agreed to take part in the research. Senior officers in the other three departments made several appointments which they failed to keep, claiming they were too busy with the budget estimates which had to be completed on schedule.

Seven officers representing the External Resources and Budgetary Departments took part in the research. Participants from ERD included one economic adviser and two Under-Secretaries, one responsible for administration and the other for World Bank funded projects. Those from the Budgetary Department included one economic adviser and three economists.

ERD has two main functions, aid management and aid coordination. The Department is directly in-charge of the administration of donor finances and funds relating to technical assistance. Four main areas in which it is involved are project identification, budgetary cycle relating to externally funded projects, expenditure management and accounting. Its involvement in project identification is to provide a link between donor aid

and the Public Investment Programme (PIP). Meanwhile, its involvement in project coordination is to ensure timely auditing of projects. It also ensures that the processing of loan repayments and related remittances to donors is carried out on schedule. The department coordinates between 25-30 major donors and 30-40 Government ministries, departments and state corporations. ERD is therefore the first "stop-shop" in dealings between donors and the Government both for in-house and sectoral projects.

Meanwhile, the function of the Budgetary Department is the allocation of public resources to facilitate governance and development and to monitor the use of the resources by public servants. The aim of the department's involvement in the on-going Civil Service Reform Programme is to ensure the availability of resources to implement the programme. It also evaluates the impact of the structural adjustment programme on the government's budgetary cycle. As part of its contribution to the Civil Service Reform Programme, it is currently implementing a number of measures that are mainly geared towards achieving an overall reduction in the government's budget deficit. These include regular reviewing of public expenditure mechanisms and trends, enhancing budgetary control and monitoring and improving revenue collection. Others are ensuring an increase in development and recurrent non-wage Operating and Maintenance (O&M) expenditures, as well as re-allocating resources toward core government functions. The success of these functions depends on the availability of accurate and reliable information.

7.5.2 Records management in the Ministry of Finance

The survey in the Ministry of Finance revealed various weaknesses with regard to records and information management. It showed that all information sent to and received from the ministry had to be channelled through one centralised registry which most interviewees felt did not adequately serve their needs. They noted that the weaknesses were partly to do with the rigid, bureaucratic and centralised decision making and communication structures within the ministry and indeed the public service as a whole.

Most departments in the Ministry do not have registries of their own. Information processing and communication is centralised under one main registry based at the ministry headquarters. However, this is now beginning to change as some of the departments contemplate setting up departmental registries. The External Resources Department is already in the process of starting a departmental registry and implementing measures to improve records management. This is confirmed in a Loose Minute from the Director, ERD, addressed to all his Desk Officers and the Accounts Controller in the Department and copied to the Financial Secretary. It reads:

There is to be an ERD Records Management Workshop at Utalii College on May 30-31, 1995. The purpose of the workshop is to develop a plan of action for improving records management in ERD...The workshop is an important activity for ERD as its purpose will be to prepare and present a detailed records management plan for the department. After approval of the plan, there will be two one-week training sessions for all

clerical and secretarial staff on the implementation of the records management system. Each Desk is requested to have one person attend both days. The Accounts Controller (ERD) is asked to have three persons attend.²⁷³

The need for departmental registries results from the inadequate services provided by the central registry to departments. Some of the officers interviewed felt that the central registry did not give them ready accessibility to all the essential information they needed to do their work. Moreover, the central registry was hampered in its efforts to provide efficient services by its own internal weaknesses and deficiencies, ie a lack of professional competence in such aspects as file tracking, file retrieval and file maintenance. Such deficiencies often caused unwarranted delays in decision making and affected the communication of information, both within the ministry and with other agencies. It was hoped that the establishment of departmental registries could help minimise delays by speeding up the processing of information, thereby making its availability to officers in the department faster and easier.

Even with the establishment of departmental registries, the officers still felt that the central registry needed to be overhauled and its filing system restructured to meet the needs of both the ministry and the departments. The restructuring exercise should address the specific weaknesses highlighted above.

²⁷³Loose Minute by the Director of ERD, Mr D R Ongalo, dated May 24, 1995. The subject is ERD Records Management Workshop, Utalii College, May 30-31, 1995

As mentioned earlier, ERD's primary function is the management and coordination of external aid on behalf of the Kenya Government. The aid consists primarily of loans and grants for various development projects. A variety of records are generated in connection with project activities, right from the time of the aid agreements to the completion of the projects. These consist of:

- aid agreements (financing agreements),
- aid disbursement reports,
- finance and project accounts
- expenditure trends
- forecasts on expenditure and resources
- project reports and,
- aide memoirs.²⁷⁴

A high proportion of the records generated by ERD consist of project files. Given the great significance of these records to the Kenya Government and to donors, these need to be properly organised and preserved not only to facilitate easy accessibility and retrieval of information but, more importantly, to preserve and protect the value and integrity of the records for accountability purposes. This is necessary since a number of the projects involve large sums of money which must be fully accounted for, initially by the project teams to the Treasury and ultimately by the Government to donors. The records must be retained until all matters connected with the project are finalised and accounts have been audited. The project cycle varies from a few months to several years. During this period,

²⁷⁴Information supplied by Messrs R Hughes, J M Kang'ethe and C I Shakaba of ERD and P Makau, P Thumbi and Jane Wathobio of Budgetary.

no records should be destroyed. In these circumstances, a properly structured records management programme is urgently required. However, as the survey revealed, no such programme exists either in the ministry headquarters or its departments.

The research further showed that records play a major role in project management and coordination. Government policy requires all projects to be appraised and approved before aid agreements are signed with donors. After approval has been granted and a donor has been identified a project file is opened. The files are maintained along with all other records, documentation and correspondence relating to the project. The research indicated that project files and related documentation have to be retained for two years after the conclusion of the project to enable project evaluation. While Treasury officials conduct the reviews on behalf of the Government, donors involved in the project appoint audit teams which are independent of the Government.

Project management also demands that there should be a regular flow and communication of information between the Treasury and the various agencies involved in the projects. Similarly, there should be regular information exchange and communication between the Treasury, the Ministry of Planning and National Development and the various departments within the Treasury. This is essential since it is through departments in the Treasury such as External Resources and Budgetary that ministries and departments in the public service are kept

informed of possible funding sources and of specific projects included in the budget estimates. Ministries and departments have to be continually appraised on developments at every stage of the budget cycle, ie from draft estimates to printed and revised estimates until the forward budget.

Provision of accurate, reliable and timely information is therefore a major prerequisite in project management and coordination. The research showed that debt servicing (loan repayments to donors) very much depends upon the availability of accurate and reliable information and data and on the regular exchange of information between the Treasury, donors and the various government ministries and departments. It also showed that the frequency of information exchange between the Treasury and donors varies from donor to donor. Whereas for some donors information exchange is limited, others like the World Bank often insist on regular up-dates. Most donors use the information to monitor the implementation of the projects until completion reports have been compiled and issued. Information exchange between the Treasury and various government agencies mainly relates to funding agencies and on debt servicing or involves clarifications about specific projects.

The task of ensuring that a regular flow of information takes place between the Treasury and the various stakeholders is the responsibility of the Aid Disbursement Unit in the Treasury and of Desk Officers in-charge of line ministries. Desk Officers are responsible for various kinds of records including project

files, contracts, project agreements and project implementation and evaluation reports. These are retained in the offices for at least two years after the completion of a project before they are taken for storage in the "Treasury Archives". It was not possible to pay a visit to the Archives for reasons which are already stated.

The survey further showed that despite the awareness in the Ministry of Finance and its departments about the important contribution made through efficient and effective records management in the management and coordination of development projects, the ministry as a whole lacks a coherent records management policy to harness the vast information resources at its disposal. Participants in the survey however acknowledged the need for accurate and reliable information in the management of external loans and of the national debt.

Records, they observed, are an important resource for both operational and statutory obligations as they contribute to the government's budgetary, accounting and auditing processes. Therefore, the ministry needs to introduce changes to ensure timeliness in the provision of information to all key players in the development process. Sometimes information is scattered in many different places, making it impossible to access. This is common with accounting, budgetary and expenditure information which, besides being dispersed, is not standardised in terms of the media. The introduction of computerised information systems could help speed up information retrieval and exchange both

within the ministry and with external agencies. However, this will only be possible if the manual records systems in the ministry are first re-structured to provide efficient and effective services.

7.6 Conclusion

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a variety of methods were used to compile information for the case studies. They included interviews, questionnaires and an analysis of reports on records management. Information obtained through these various means showed records management to be a new and emerging concept which has so far had little impact on efficient administration in the three agencies. It also showed that although records are constantly being created and accumulated by these agencies as a record of day-to-day business transactions, their proper management and organisation is hampered by a lack of appropriate infrastructures, policies and resources. It also showed that despite growing awareness about the importance of records management, most senior officials in the public service accord it little recognition, treating it more or less like a clerical function. Consequently, poor organisation of records and ineffective control and retrieval of information has become a major problem for most agencies in the public service.

Although poor cooperation by some officials proved a major stumbling block and affected the outcome of the case studies, they nevertheless demonstrate the necessity to link current

reforms in the public service with the management of information. Information management in general and records management in particular have many practical benefits which the government cannot afford to ignore. A number of these practical benefits were highlighted by Mr Gaylord Avedi, Permanent Secretary and Director, Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President in a detailed response to the author's questionnaire.

Mr Avedi explained that poor management of records adversely affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government. Poor management of information, he went on, meant that the Government could neither plan effectively nor make informed decisions about its various programmes. Without accurate and reliable records, the Government would find it impossible to control or be accountable for its resources as records were the basis of accountability in the public service.

The case studies highlighted a number of fundamental issues which the Kenya Government urgently needs to address. First and foremost, the Government needs to come up with a definite policy on records management in the public service. No comprehensive records management programme will succeed unless it is backed by a clearly-stated government policy on records management and until appropriate record keeping procedures are developed.

Secondly, the studies on records management being undertaken by the MCSD on behalf of the DPM in various agencies need to be

made more systematic and should have clear objectives. There is a need to ensure that the studies form part of a comprehensive business process analysis programme that looks at a whole range of management issues in the public service. The Government stands to benefit by including records management as a major component in its Civil Service Reform Programme and this tremendous opportunity should not therefore be missed.

Thirdly, the Government should devise an action plan to implement the MCSD recommendations. Fourthly, the studies by the MCSD should involve the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service, which is mandated through the Public Archives Act to deal with archival and records management issues in the public service. The Archives has nearly fifteen years experience in records management activities in the public service and should be accorded the opportunity to exercise professional leadership in this field in which it is widely knowledgeable.

Finally, the impression formed by the author based on the findings of the case studies is that as far as Kenya Government officials are concerned, computerisation holds the key to solving problems of information management in the public service. This notion is overly simplistic. What they forget is that most of the information in the public service is paper-based. A linkage is therefore required between this information and information being generated in electronic media. Information whether in hard copy or in electronic format must be properly structured and well-managed so as to provide a reliable and authentic record.

Moreover, it must be properly structured and well-managed to facilitate retrieval and accessibility. The answer to these problems lies in the willingness of the Kenya Government to develop comprehensive policies and procedures to promote the efficient and effective management of both paper-based and electronic information.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS: THE DONOR PERSPECTIVE

8.1 Introduction

Besides the case studies which are dealt with in chapter seven, the field research in Kenya explored the nature of donor involvement and support for the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya. It also explored donor perceptions of the role and significance of records and information management in relation to the Public Sector Reform Programme being implemented by the Kenya Government. Furthermore, it sought to highlight specific examples of donor perceptions of the need for accurate and reliable information in meeting the fundamental objectives of administrative reform namely: efficient and effective decision making, good governance and accountability. Finally, an effort was made to highlight specific actions, if any, taken by donors to bring government information systems and policies in line with the goals and objectives of administrative reform. In this connection, another aim of the research was to establish whether records management was and should be included as a conditionality of donor aid.

This aspect of the research was very successful. All six respondents who took part on behalf of the agencies were very senior officials. They included Stephen O'Brien, the World Bank

Chief of Mission in Kenya and Eastern Africa; Walter Mahler, the IMF Resident Representative in Kenya; Pauline Hayes, Institution Development Coordinator, ODA; Ms. Pape, a senior officer at the European Union Mission in Kenya; and Dr P W Kariuki and Lucas Ojiambo, economists at the IMF and the World Bank Missions in Kenya respectively. Out of the five agencies originally contacted to take part in the survey, only the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) failed to respond even after a reminder was sent. This chapter presents a summary of the views and opinions expressed by these officials in questionnaires or in discussions with the author.

8.2 Why records management should underpin administrative reforms

As a background to reviewing the results of the investigation, it is important to consider the importance of records management for administrative reform. As indicated in chapter two, the term "records management" refers to the management of recorded information from creation to disposition, regardless of the media used in its creation, storage or exploitation. This includes the management of information in electronic media and in many other forms. Computers have facilitated the processing of information and made its retrieval easier provided the information is properly structured and well-organised right from the beginning. However, records in electronic media are complex and difficult to manage over time.

In 1995, Dr Anne Thurston, Reader in International Records Studies, University College London, observed that "if records are to be available to government as a corporate resource and asset, they must be created, collected and maintained in a manner that ensures their quality, relevance and integrity".²⁷⁵ In other words, they must be structured systematically to ensure that the information they contain is linked to the functions, activities and business processes which they document. Furthermore, the information must be accessible to those who need it to formulate policy, make decisions, deliver programmes or simply meet the requirements of state accountability. Information whether in paper or electronic format therefore has to be effectively organised not only to meet these requirements but also to support organisational business processes. Records management, therefore, provides the means by which the objectives of the reform programme can be met.

Yet, since the advent of public sector reforms, the policies adopted by most governments in developing countries and donors alike have tended to accord information technology a high priority, with records management receiving a low priority in terms of organisational placement, staffing and budget allocation. At the same time, effective and properly coordinated government policies aimed at improving the management of records

²⁷⁵Thurston, Anne. "The Management of Public Sector Records in the Commonwealth in relation to Public Service Reform". A Paper presented at the Caribbean Seminar on Public Service Reform and the Challenges of Strategic Information Management, organised by the Commonwealth Records Association and the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration, Trinidad, 4-5 April 1995, p 1

in the public sector are in most cases lacking. The result is that computerisation programmes are being introduced in key areas of government operations without the support of records management. Through records, the state or its officials can be held responsible and accountable for their policies and actions and citizens' rights can be protected. However, in the absence of records that are accurate, reliable and authentic, these rights are at great risk. The current trend which favours computerisation cannot be reversed. However, it must be extended to records management.

8.3 Donor support for the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya

Respondents were asked about their agencies' support for the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya. Walter Mahler (IMF) noted that his institution's support for the programme was two-fold. Firstly, the IMF worked closely with the Kenya Government to foster the development of sound macro-economic policies and to ensure that the Government developed an effective action plan to implement the Public Sector Reform Programme. Secondly, along with other donors, it had provided financial support to enable the Government to implement macro-economic and related reforms in the public service. Its support for reforms in the public service was in recognition of the fact that an efficient and effective civil service plays a significant role in promoting a sound macro-economic environment. He however noted, that the role of the IMF unlike that of most other donors, was not to finance

projects. Its main objectives under the Public Sector Reform Programme were to:

- encourage the government to pursue sound economic policies,
- encourage the government to put in place mechanisms to cut the budget deficit,
- encourage a review and restructuring of ministries to achieve a leaner civil service, and
- encourage the government to implement the Public Enterprise Reform Programme.

The World Bank is another major player in the Public Sector Reform Programmes being implemented in Kenya. Its involvement with reform programmes in Kenya goes back to the 1970s and 1980s when the Bank first began to provide support towards sectoral reforms in agriculture, trade and industry. The Bank continued to support policy and programme reviews in various sectors up to the early 1990s when the structural adjustment programme was launched in the country. Mr O'Brien (World Bank) observed that the Bank's support for the Public Sector Reform Programme began in January 1995 following an "agreement signed between the World Bank and the Government of Kenya on the implementation of an Institutional Development and Civil Service Reform Project".²⁷⁶ He noted that:

Out of the total project cost of US\$156.98 million, US\$25.35 million was financed by the Bank. In addition

²⁷⁶Stephen F O'Brien, the World Bank Chief of Mission in Kenya and Eastern Africa.

to the provision of funds, the Bank regularly supervised the implementation progress of the project to ensure that the project objectives were achieved within the planned timeframe. The Bank also assisted the Government in the procurement of technical assistance services needed for the smooth implementation of the project.²⁷⁷

Further clarification of the World Bank's role in the on-going reforms in Kenya was provided by Mr Ojiambo who noted that the Bank was only involved with certain aspects of the reforms. For example, the Bank supported capacity building and human resource development programmes but was not directly involved with either the staff retrenchment or ministerial reviews and restructuring exercises in the civil service. He pointed out however, that in principle the Bank supported the rationalisation of ministerial functions since this contributed to capacity building. Because of this, the Bank had provided financial assistance for staff training programmes as part of its contribution to capacity building in the civil service. Also, as a lending institution, the Bank was keen to know how the money it loaned the Kenya Government and to other governments was spent. For this reason, the Bank considered accountability and transparency among its top priorities. It believed these to be among the fundamental principles of good government. Under the project agreement signed between the World Bank and the Government of Kenya, the following objectives were to be achieved:

²⁷⁷ibid.

- an overall rationalisation of staffing and improved establishment control leading to better resource allocation in the civil service, forward planning, productivity improvements and cost-effective delivery of public services,
- introduction of wide-ranging compensation reforms resulting in a simplified and more transparent grading structure, better aligned to the external markets, and a competitive salary structure,
- introduction of better personnel management practices to obtain better performance from existing staff and attract high quality recruits into the service,
- improved opportunities for staff development through better planning and delivery of training by the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) and other similar bodies, and
- a restructuring of five core ministries to achieve quantifiable improvements in service delivery to Kenya's citizens.²⁷⁸

The United Kingdom Overseas Development Administration (ODA) has operated in Kenya for many years, with its headquarters based in Nairobi. For nearly 16 years, Nairobi has also hosted the regional office for Eastern Africa. ODA aid programmes in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) are generally of two kinds, namely: (i) project aid commonly known as technical cooperation, and (ii) programme aid in the form of quick disbursements. However, since all such aid programmes are funded through taxpayers' money, the British Government through the ODA is always keen to know how the money is spent and the manner in which each project is implemented, as it is ultimately the ODA that is accountable to the British public through Parliament.

Pauline Hayes (ODA) indicated that the ODA was involved with

²⁷⁸ibid.

some aspects of the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya. However, its involvement in Kenya in comparison with Uganda was significantly small. Technical assistance in Uganda had included the development of a personnel information control system; policy development, including pay reform and records management; and the establishment of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme (VERS). She noted that the reason ODA's assistance to Kenya's Public Sector Reform Programme had remained small was because the programme was still in its early stages and therefore a major focus of the programme was yet to emerge. She noted further that another concern of British aid programmes during this era of structural adjustment programmes was promoting good government.

Ms. Pape (European Union) noted that her organisation had taken a keen interest in macro-economic reforms in Kenya, but other than that it had no direct involvement in the Public Sector Reform Programme as it considered this a matter for the Bretton Woods institutions, ie the World Bank and the IMF. However, she noted that the European Union was involved with various sectoral projects in support of Kenya's economic growth and development.

8.4 Donor perceptions of the role and significance of records and information management in relation to the Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya

Respondents were asked to comment on how their institutions viewed the role and significance of records management and/or information management in relation to the reform programme in

Kenya. In addition, they were asked to highlight practical examples which illustrated the need for accurate and reliable information in the implementation of the reform programme. Responding to the questionnaire, Mr O'Brien (World Bank) stated that information was vital in project implementation in several ways. He noted that proper dissemination of information relating to procurement of project needs and disbursements of funds to project clients was essential if projects were to be implemented as planned and if unnecessary delays were to be avoided.

He explained that usually every project has two accounts; a revolving account (the Special Account) which is held in a local bank, and an external one. Although the Project Implementation Units (PIUs) prepared payment requests, authorisation of payment was the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, which in turn received bank statements or payment advices from the account holders whenever a transaction took place. Very often, payment advices did not reach the PIUs. This made it difficult for the PIUs to keep track of the levels of balances in the project accounts, especially the Special Account, which had to be replenished regularly. This sometimes caused delays in payments to project clients, which in turn, caused delays in the completion of projects.

Mr Ojiambo (World Bank) observed that the management of records or information and the management of the government budget deficit were significantly linked. Therefore, effective control of government expenditure required accurate and reliable

data which had to be accessible to various personnel involved in the management of government funds. As far as the World Bank was concerned, one of the main problems with the management of financial information in the civil service was that, quite often, the physical records and accounting books containing the relevant information were not always properly preserved. The consequence was inadequate information, which made determination of the budget deficit difficult. It also meant that public expenditure could neither be planned nor controlled effectively.

Mr Mahler (IMF) noted that records and information management systems needed to be improved in order to underpin revenue collection and expenditure control in the public service. He singled out the Customs Department, which he noted had been unable to collect revenue effectively because of poor documentation. He added that the Government as well as donors had expressed concern about the poor state of record keeping in the department. The Government urgently needed to consider improving record keeping and information management systems in all its revenue and expenditure departments including Customs, Income Tax, VAT (Value Added Tax), Pensions and agencies such as the National Social Security Fund, as part of the modernisation programme under the Public Sector Reform Programme.

He added that records management provided the means by which government accounting and statistical information and data could be managed. Both the Government and donors require this information to monitor economic performance in the country and

to assess economic trends such as the level of inflation, the level of government borrowing, interest on government loans, principal payments to donors, monetary debt flows etc. He noted that accurate and reliable information also facilitates the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service.

Pauline Hayes (ODA) observed that accurate and reliable information was an essential requirement in meeting the objectives of good government and effective decision making in the civil service. She noted that although it was premature to talk about records management in Kenya, the situation in East Africa (ie Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) was more or less similar considering that they all shared a common legacy of British colonial administration. Record keeping systems in all three countries were based on the registry system of file control. Through its aid programmes in Uganda, where it was currently providing support for both records management and computerised personnel information systems improvement programmes, the ODA had realised that on the whole, systems required to manage government information had largely broken down. The consequence was that information required to reach informed decisions could not often be found. Furthermore, too much time was spent trying to locate information which in most cases was not available or could not be traced.

Like Messrs Mahler and Ojiambo, Ms. Pape (European Union) agreed that the failure to manage essential government information was one of the factors contributing to the poor

management of the country's economy. She cited two examples, the Central Bank of Kenya and the Central Bureau of Statistics which, she noted, had not been able to maintain up-to-date and reliable economic data required to monitor budgetary deficit trends or to detect irregular financial dealings. As a result, the Government had been unable to either detect or prevent fraudulent financial dealings.

Officials of all the donor agencies represented agreed that the failure to manage records properly or maintain proper documentation compromised the state's accountability towards its citizens and undermined relations with donors. They noted that it was important that every penny given as development aid is fully accounted for. This could not be achieved if the Government did not maintain proper documentation. Dr Kariuki (IMF) observed that certain financial information and economic data was required by the Government and various other agencies, including the IMF and the World Bank, to monitor major economic variables such as inflation, money supply growth and the budget deficit. It was in this connection that the IMF encouraged the Government to ensure that this kind of data was properly maintained in whatever form.

8.5 Donor support for programmes to improve record keeping and/or information management in the Public Service

At the time of the research, no donor was involved in projects related to records management within the public service. When asked to comment about donor programmes aimed at improving

record keeping and/or information management in the public service, most respondents praised the efforts that were being made to introduce computerisation in the public service. The IMF and the European Union officials noted that these would help improve financial management and accounting as well as accountability in the public service through the provision of more accurate information. Mr Ojiambo (World Bank) noted that the Bank, jointly with the Government of Kenya had set up a computerised information system which had enabled the Treasury, the Central Bank of Kenya and individual ministries to be linked. This had enabled the Government to closely monitor expenditure trends and budget deficits based on weekly and monthly expenditure profiles.

Mr O'Brien (World Bank) confirmed that computerisation (with emphasis on computerisation of personnel records) was an important component of the Civil Service Reform Project which had been agreed between the World Bank and the Kenya Government. He stated that "specifically, purchase of computers was included in the equipment component of the project, which accounted for US\$4.34 million out of the total World Bank financing of US\$25.35 million".²⁷⁹ He added that computerisation was supported under many other World Bank-financed projects. At the time of the research in June 1995, the Bank was considering another computerisation project to "link the Ministry of Finance to the Bank's internal Loan Administration System through a computer hook-up, so that the Treasury could automatically access

²⁷⁹ibid.

information on the status of payments being processed by the Bank on Bank-funded projects".²⁸⁰

Like the World Bank, the ODA was considering financial support for a Computerised Personnel Management Information System (PIMS). According to Pauline Hayes, support for this kind of project was based on the ODA experience in Uganda which had shown systems to manage personnel information in the public service to be generally inadequate and needed to be addressed urgently. Besides the project on personnel information systems, the ODA had also agreed in principle to finance a computerised information system in the Attorney-General's (AG's) Chambers intended to speed up the handling of litigation cases. The ODA believed the two projects would enhance administrative efficiency and accountability in the civil service. It considered the projects part of the British Government's vital contribution to good governance in Kenya and saw them as forming part of the ODA's long-term strategy to information management in the civil service.

8.6 Records management as a component of donor aid

In 1984, Dr Jake Knoppers described "information as a growing industry, and the main component in the administration of government".²⁸¹ He considered records management and archives

²⁸⁰ibid.

²⁸¹Knoppers, Jake V. op. cit. pp 1-2

as forming "part of the information service sector"²⁸² and stressed that "while the General Information Programme (GIP) of UNESCO provided for mutual assistance in this area on a cooperative and generalised basis, the programme would benefit greatly from in-depth assistance provided under the auspices of bilateral and multilateral foreign aid programmes".²⁸³

More than a decade after Knoppers made the observation, economic recovery programmes and public sector reform programmes implemented with donor financial support have still not included records management among the areas that should receive urgent and significant support. Instead, donor assistance has focused on information technology, forgetting that "computerised information systems in themselves do not create well-structured information without the support of records management".²⁸⁴

To test the proposal put forward by Knoppers, respondents were asked whether records management or the effective management of information should be made a conditionality of all donor aid programmes. A variety of responses were received which indicated that donors generally did not wish to have the issue of aid conditionalities given too much prominence as this was a most touchy issue of structural adjustment programmes. The World Bank representative's response was a "No!" and he was not willing to

²⁸²ibid. pp 1-2

²⁸³ibid. pp 1-2

²⁸⁴Thurston, Anne. "The Management of Public Sector Records in the Commonwealth in relation to Public Sector Reform", op. cit. p 3

be drawn into any further discussion on the subject.

Pauline Hayes (ODA) noted that the ODA would be hesitant to adopt this approach unless it was convinced beyond reasonable doubt that this single aspect put ODA-supported projects at great risk. She, however, suggested that matters concerning the effective management of records or information should be taken into consideration at the project design stage, something which rarely happened or was thought of by the parties concerned. None of the ODA funded projects in Kenya had so far addressed the issue of records management. However, she noted that a start had been made in other countries such as Uganda and Tanzania.

One specific area of ODA interest was the processing of retirement benefits, where the basic problem was the non-availability of accurate and reliable records to speed up the process. The ODA was considering further financial assistance to help speed up the implementation of the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme. This would be in addition to assistance given in January 1995 when it provided consultancy and financial support towards the production of an information handbook on how retirees can cope with retirement. She noted further that imposing conditionalities was not the right thing to do as there were other ways of seeking assurances such as conducting project audits or quiet diplomacy.

The IMF officials were non-committal on the subject except to say that all kinds of data were needed to review economic

developments in the country and to evaluate donor assisted development programmes. It was for the Government of Kenya, not donors, to enforce and meet the requirements for effective records or information management. The European Union officer stressed that her organisation did not normally stipulate conditions when granting development aid to Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) States.²⁸⁵ Thus, although information management was essential for accountability, the organisation did not see any need for stipulating this as a conditionality.

8.7 Conclusion

The main conclusion to be drawn from the survey is that despite current reforms being undertaken by the Kenya Government aimed at "renewing" government, there have been no significant improvements in the management of records in the public sector. This may be attributed to various factors. One, donors have expressed keenness to support programmes related to computerisation rather than those to improve manual record keeping systems which they tend to see as a retrospective step. Two, both government and donors define information narrowly in terms of computerisation and tend to view computers increasingly as "solutions to the management of the information required to

²⁸⁵Nearly 68 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries are signatories to the Lome Convention, a Protocol providing a framework for trade and economic cooperation with the European Community. Altogether, there have been four such Conventions, all signed in Lome, the Capital of Togo. The Convention currently in force, Lome IV was signed on 15 December 1995.

deliver effective public services".²⁸⁶ Three, there is a lack of properly coordinated government policies aimed at improving the management of records in the public sector.

While Kenya Government officials and donor representatives do appreciate the value of records and information management, by adopting such a narrow and simplistic approach to information management they are compounding and perpetuating the problems. Besides, they seem not to appreciate the negative impact this will have on the reform process and on public services in general. A more realistic approach is required which recognises the importance of managing recorded information in paper as well as electronic media. It is critical that donors should lend support to this new initiative if their programme objectives are to be met.

²⁸⁶Thurston, Anne. Quoted in Pino Akotia, op. cit. p 209

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The records of government provide the public with evidence of what its policies and actions are and are the basis for government itself to operate. The records also provide the public with a running commentary on the way public affairs are handled. Moreover, they provide insights into the way a country's institutions have developed.²⁸⁷

Macro-economic and public sector reform programmes being implemented by most African governments and developing countries elsewhere have brought to the fore concern about the way this vital resource is being managed. In many sectors of government, records management is still considered a low priority and a clerical function not worth the attention of senior management. This attitude is largely responsible for the low status accorded records management in most organisations in developing countries. It is also responsible for the lack of policies and initiatives to promote efficient systems for managing the information life cycle. With the growing use of computers in government and with little attention being paid to records management, increasingly this is having serious consequences for public policy development and decision making in the public service.

²⁸⁷National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). The Effects of Electronic Recordkeeping on the Historical Record of the U.S Government. A Report for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington DC: NAPA, January 1989, p iii

This thesis has examined the relationship between records management and administrative reform programmes in Kenya. Its main conclusion is that whereas well-managed records enhance public administration and are the cornerstone of good governance, poorly-managed records undermine government efficiency and accountability. Consideration should therefore be given to including records management as a major component in all government programmes and indeed public sector reform programmes.

The study notes that the Kenya Government, through the Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM), has generally supported the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service and the DPM's Management Consultancy Services Division in their efforts to improve record keeping throughout the public service. However, current efforts have not been successful in getting public agencies to manage their records in a satisfactory manner based on the life cycle approach. The study advocates that there should be closer cooperation and coordination in the activities of the Kenya National Archives and the Management Consultancy Services Division in an effort to promote effective record keeping systems in the public service. It advocates further that the DPM's functions in records management should be transferred to the Kenya National and Documentation Service which has the competency to deal with professional issues in this area.

The study further notes that although the Civil Service

Reform Programme and Action Plan²⁸⁸ issued by the Government in May 1992 highlights the need to improve personnel and payroll management information systems, it makes no mention of the need to improve other aspects of records or information management in the public service. That records management is not recognised as a key management function is particularly surprising in an age when government systems all over the world are having to undergo a major "reengineering" process, influenced not only by changing socio-economic and political trends but also information and technology trends with profound effects on every aspect of public sector activity. These developments have profound implications for the way records are managed in support of organisational functions.

The analysis presented in the study demonstrates that both the macro-economic and administrative reforms being implemented by the Kenya Government are part of a global process of socio-economic and political change. Countries throughout the world, developed as well as developing, are redefining the role of their public service sectors and re-assessing their relationships, on the one hand in dealings with the general public and on the other with the private sector. This is an era in which the public service, for so many years accustomed to viewing its role in terms of safeguarding law and order and providing limited public services, finds itself confronted with growing public demands for efficient and effective services and with greater accountability

²⁸⁸Kenya, Republic of. Kenya Civil Service Reform Programme and Action Plan, op. cit.

and transparency in decision making. It is also an era in which the public service faces growing demands for greater accountability and transparency in the way public funds and other resources are managed and utilised.

The study concludes that it is regrettable the Kenya Government has not taken full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the reforms to re-examine policies concerned with the management of public sector records and to promote the management of information as a strategic resource. The consequences of this failure could be costly in terms of meeting the reform objectives. The study argues that public sector records serve as a testimony of the actions and transactions carried out by the state and provide the evidence needed to support accountability, transparency and efficiency in government. However, this can only be achieved if the records are well-managed as a strategic resource and asset.

The study argues further that in most countries, and certainly in Kenya, the National Archives occupies a central position in matters concerning the management of records, particularly public sector records. Public agencies, therefore, rely upon it to provide professional leadership and guidance on all matters concerning the management of archives and records. Therefore, a coordinated government policy, led by the Kenya National Archives and Documentation Service is required in shaping policy concerning the effective management of all government information, including records. The author believes

that the status of records management in the public service should be elevated through closer collaboration between the National Archives, the Directorate of Personnel Management in the Office of the President, the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service Reform Secretariat. Such collaboration should facilitate the inclusion of records management in all major government programmes. Moreover, record keeping and archival considerations must form an intrinsic part of the overall objectives of public sector reforms.

The study advocates that any attempt to find sustainable solutions to the problems of managing public sector records must involve the National Archives. It advocates further that the Kenya Government should capitalise on the professional expertise of the Kenya National Archives by seeking its involvement in the planning process for national information strategies and administrative reform programmes. Continuing research is also needed to examine closely the management of public sector records and to determine the influence of records management on the government workplace. The research should seek to establish the effects of records management on specific sectors including those charged with policy development and decision making, financial and personnel management as well as project management. This exercise should be closely coordinated between the Kenya National Archives and the main policy ministries or departments of the Government.

The post-independence government in Kenya inherited and has

maintained the British registry model as the central point of control for the management of current records. Registries therefore continue to be the source and providers of paper-based information and their management is a central issue in a records management reform programme. However, unless records are managed from creation to disposition, access to the information they contain will remain buried and cannot be availed either for decision making or as the basis of accountability and efficiency in government. The Kenya Government must therefore take seriously the need to protect its records as a vital resource to avert the growing information crisis which could undermine its ability to function effectively or to implement programmes and projects designed to meet its development goals or meet the objectives of administrative reform.

A similar situation obtains in many other African countries. As indicated in chapter three, most government systems in developing countries generally suffer from weak systems in records management and as a result are not readily able to access information when required. Most African countries inherited European registry systems which provide for managing records. However, they are yet to consider ways and means of modernising these systems to support administrative requirements. The consequence is that although registries continue to act as the custodians of records, the records are hardly perceived by management as a means of actively facilitating accountability, transparency and efficiency in government. Because of these reasons and many others, vital records required to support

decision making or development planning in government continue to remain inaccessible and unavailable for these purposes.

Most agencies in the public service are just beginning to use information technology and are yet to examine its full implications for information management. Though computerisation enhances the processing of information and facilitates its access and use, the proliferation of paper records associated with computer use is unprecedented. Furthermore, the management of electronically generated information is quite complex. These issues call for a coordinated government policy on the use of information technology and information management. Also required is the development of standards and procedures to provide for the management and use of electronic records in the public service.

Kenya Government officials need to realise that if the country is to remain competitive in today's global market economy, it must exploit the combined potential of records management, information management and information technology. The strategic management of information in its various forms is rapidly gaining recognition as a key business issue with serious implications for public sector management. One such implication being that information management and use must no longer be treated as a separate entity within an organisation, but as an integral component of the organisation's mission as well as vision.

Research in developed countries demonstrates that

organisations whose decision making and planning processes are supported by sound information management systems stand a better chance of success in their missions and purposes. Kenya Government officials must therefore begin to develop a keen awareness of the various issues surrounding records management, information management and information technology, and to understand the benefits engendered through sound records and information management as a tool for effective public sector management.

The study demonstrates that donor agencies have a critical role to play in helping to ensure that the official record is reliable, accessible and authentic. Although most public sector reform programmes implemented in Africa today almost inevitably include a component of computerisation as part of development assistance programmes, donors need to be made aware that computers in themselves are not the solution to information problems unless issues relating to records management are also addressed. Technical assistance and loan programmes will make a much more valuable contribution to good governance if they include a records management element.

The study has sought to take a first step toward a new approach to records management in Kenya by relating it to administrative reform programmes. It is hoped that an important contribution of the study will be to raise awareness in Kenya among both records management and archives professionals and senior managers in government of the need for a coordinated

approach in finding solutions to the problems affecting the management of public sector records by promulgating legal regulations and introducing policies that promote the management of information as a strategic resource. The policies to be adopted must contribute towards raising the profile of records management as an issue requiring the attention of executive level management in the public service. Finally, it is hoped that the study will contribute towards creating a wholistic approach to administrative reform programmes in Kenya, with information as the keystone.

The overriding issue emerging from these findings is that effective management of public affairs cannot take place without the introduction of complementary mechanisms in support of effective information planning, information management and information use. Collectively, it is within the power of senior officials, policy makers and records professionals, working with IT professionals to provide these mechanisms. Alone, none of these groups can achieve sustainable solutions.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF DONOR AGENCIES

Please respond to all the questions. If the space provided is not sufficient use another sheet. This questionnaire will form the basis of interviews/discussions with representatives of donor agencies.

Part I

Name of respondent_____

Designation or title_____

Donor agency_____

Address_____ Telephone_____

Part II

1 How long has your office existed or operated in Kenya?

2 What kind of programmes do you normally fund or support?

3 How do you raise funds or money for your programmes or projects?_____

4 In the past, what problems have you experienced in implementing projects or programmes which you have directly or jointly funded?_____

5 What conditions do you normally attach to your aid programmes?_____

- 6 What kind of documentation do you normally generate for each project or programme funded by your agency?_____
-
- 7 What happens to the documentation after the completion of the project?_____
-
- 8 To what extent have you been involved with SAPs and civil service reform in Kenya?_____
-
- 9 What specific aspects of civil service reform are you involved in?_____
- 10 What are some of the problems that you have encountered in implementing administrative reform programmes in Kenya?_____
- 11 Do you think records management can contribute to civil service effectiveness and efficiency?_____
-
- 12 Bearing in mind that records and information management are critical in the formulation of policy and for underpinning Government service delivery programmes, what improvements can be made in managing records and information in Kenya?_____
-
- 13 Given that records contribute significantly to the management of development projects and programmes, how can records management be incorporated into the projects or programmes which you fund?_____
- 14 What kind of documentation do you normally require to be

retained by the Government department implementing each project or programme?_____

15 How do you see information management contributing to administrative reform programmes and structural adjustment programmes in Kenya?_____

16 What background information do you normally require from the Government before embarking on a particular project?_____

17 Do you think effective management of information should be made a condition of all donor aid programmes?_____

18 In what way can improvements be made to the effective management of financial and personnel information?_____

19 In what way can effective records management contribute towards reducing costs involved in the implementation of development projects for both the Government and donors?_____

20 In what way do you think the introduction of automated records systems will contribute to the management of information?_____

21 How do you think the Government should move from a manual records management system to an automated one?_____

APPENDIX 2 (A)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

Please respond to all the questions. If the space provided is not sufficient use another sheet. This questionnaire will form the basis of interviews/discussions with senior Government officers.

Part I

Name of respondent_____

Designation or title_____

Ministry or Department_____

Address_____ Telephone_____

Part II

1 What kind of structural adjustment and civil service reform programmes is your Ministry/Department involved in?_____

2 How are these programmes funded?_____

3 What is the extent of donor involvement in these programmes?_____

4 What problems have you encountered in implementing the programmes?_____

- 5 What kind of documentation is being generated through the implementation of these programmes?_____
- _____
- 6 How is this information co-ordinated in your Ministry/Department and who manages it?_____
- 7 How is the information shared with other Government Ministries or institutions involved in SAPs and civil service reform?_____
- _____
- 8 In seeking funding for joint projects with donors, what kind of background information do you normally require and how long is it kept after funding is approved?_____
- _____
- 9 Is there a regular flow of information between your Ministry/Department and donor agencies_____
- _____
- 10 How is information between your Ministry/Department and donor agencies handled?_____
- _____
- 11 Who normally handles information relating to projects funded from external sources?_____
- _____
- 12 What happens to the information after the project or programme is completed?_____
- _____

13 Do you think the effective management of records can contribute to effectiveness and efficiency in the civil service?_____

14 Proper management of information, timeliness of information flow and retrieval facilitates decision making and contributes to efficiency and effectiveness in the organization. Does your Ministry/Department have a Records Management Strategic Plan?_____

15 As part of the administrative reform programme, it has been proposed that a new system of performance appraisal standards be developed in the civil service. In what way do you think records management can contribute in developing this new system?_____

16 Bearing in mind that records and information management are critical in the formulation of policy and in underpinning Government service delivery programmes, what improvements can be made in managing records and information in your Ministry?/Department_____

17 To what extent has records and information management become part of your Strategic Planning Process in the Ministry/Department?_____

18 Given that records contribute significantly to the management of development projects and programmes, how can

records management be incorporated into the management of specific projects and programmes undertaken by the Ministry/Department?_____

19 In what way can effective records management contribute towards reducing costs involved in the implementation of development projects?_____

20 One of the objectives of SAPs as well as administrative reform is to reduce Government deficit by reducing the number of civil servants. What problems have you faced in implementing the programme? _____

21 What kind of documentation have you had to rely on in implementing the programme?_____

22 What kind of documentation is required in processing retirement benefits? Has this information been readily available?_____

23 It is common practice for civil servants to be transferred from one Ministry to another. How does this affect the management of personnel records?_____

24 Is there any direct link between personnel files in the Ministries and pension files?_____

25 How do you see effective record keeping contributing to the collection of Government revenue and the control of Government expenditure?_____

26 In what way do you think the Auditor-General's Department should be strengthened in order to effectively carry out management audits in addition to financial audits in the public sector?_____

27 Do you think effective record keeping should be made mandatory throughout the civil service?_____

28 What changes would you want introduced in the management of information in your Ministry/Department?_____

29 In what way do you think the introduction of automated record systems will contribute to the management of information in your Ministry/Department?_____

30 How does your Ministry/Department plan to move from a manual records management system to an automated system?_____

APPENDIX 2 (B)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS

Please respond to all the questions. If the space provided is not sufficient use another sheet. This questionnaire will form the basis of interviews/discussions with senior Government officers.

Part I

Name of respondent_____

Designation_____

Department_____ Ministry_____

Address_____ Telephone_____

Part II

1 What are the main functions of your Ministry/Department?

2 What are your duties and responsibilities in the Ministry/Department?_____

3 What kind of procedure do you follow in day-to-day decision making? _____

4 To what extent do you rely on records and other information available in the Ministry/Department to make decisions?_____

5 Is this information always readily available?_____

- 6 What problems do you encounter in obtaining information from your offices? _____

- 7 Do you have any established procedures for processing and storing information in your Ministry/Department? _____

- 8 Are these procedures spelt out in an office manual or instruction? _____

- 9 Does your Ministry/Department have any responsibilities for co-ordinating and implementing development projects and programmes? _____

- 10 What problems do you encounter in implementing projects and programmes which fall under your Ministry/Department _____

- 11 Do any of these problems emanate from the failure to manage records effectively? _____

- 12 What kind of information do you normally require for implementing and monitoring development projects? _____

- 13 What kind of documentation is usually generated for each project or programme? _____

- 14 How is this documentation managed? _____

- 15 What happens to this documentation once the project is

completed? _____

16 Do you consider present arrangements for managing this information satisfactory? _____

17 In what way can effective records management contribute towards reducing costs involved in the implementation of development projects? _____

18 Bearing in mind that records and information are critical in the formulation of policy and in underpinning Government service delivery programmes, what improvements can be made in managing records in your Ministry/Department?

19 To what extent has records and information management become part of your Strategic Planning Process in the Ministry/Department? _____

20 Presently the Kenya civil service is undergoing administrative reforms. How has your Ministry/Department been affected by these changes? _____

21 How do you see information management contributing to administrative reforms and structural adjustment programmes? _____

22 As part of the administrative reform programme, it has been proposed that a new system of performance appraisal

standards be developed in the civil service. In what way do you think records management can contribute in developing this new system?_____

23 Proper management of information, timeliness of information flow and retrieval facilitates decision making and contributes to efficiency and effectiveness in the organization. Does your Ministry/Department have a Records Management Strategic Plan?_____

24 In what way do you think the Auditor-General's Department should be strengthened in order to effectively carry out management audits in addition to financial audits in the public sector?_____

25 In what way do you think the introduction of automated record systems will contribute to the management of information in your Ministry/Department?_____

26 How does your Ministry/Department plan to move from a manual records management system to an automated system?_____

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR REGISTRY SUPERVISORS

Please respond to all the questions. If the space provided is not sufficient use another sheet. This questionnaire will form the basis of interviews with registry supervisors.

Part 1

Ministry or Department_____

Address_____ Telephone_____

Name of respondent_____

Designation_____

Part 11

1 What are the main functions of your registry?_____

2 How many officers does your registry serve?_____

3 Do you have a separate mail section or room?

Yes/No

4 Who receives in-coming mail?_____

5 On average, what is the volume of in-coming mail per week?_____

6 How many officers see in-coming mail before it is passed to action officers?_____

7 Does the registry have established procedures for processing and controlling the use of records?

Yes/No

8 Are the procedures spelt out in an office manual or instruction?

Yes/No

9 If Yes, when was the manual compiled?_____

(a) who compiled it?_____

(b) is it useful? Yes/No

(c) have copies been distributed to staff and users?

Yes/No

(d) is it regularly reviewed and up-dated?

Yes/No

10 Does the manual define the tasks, responsibilities and authority of the registry supervisor?

Yes/No

11 Does it specify and define the duties and tasks to be performed by the registry staff? Yes/No

12 Does it provide guidance for registry users?

Yes/No

13 Who decides:

(a) when a new file should be opened?_____

(b) what registry classification should be given to a new a file?_____

(c) where a particular correspondence should be filed?

(d) what security classification a file should have?

14 When creating a new file, what procedures do you follow to ensure that:

(a) file titles are clear and precise?_____

(b) file titles reflect file contents?_____

(c) file titles are not too broad or too narrow?_____

(d) files are not too thick or too thin?_____

15 Is there a policy specifying how long an officer can keep a file? Yes/No

16 In spite of this policy, do officers sometimes keep files in their offices for long periods of time?

Yes/No

17 How do you ensure that registry services are efficient and that they meet the information needs of your officers?_____

18 Do you get any feedback from senior officers in the Ministry/Department about the services provided by the registry and is there a formal channel of communicating this information to you?_____

19 What steps are taken when a file is lost or goes missing?

20 What happens to the missing file when it is located?

21 After files are returned from action officers to the registry are they checked to ascertain if action has been completed before being stored away? _____

22 When do you close your files:

-after a certain period of time? Yes/No

-when they reach a certain thickness

Yes/No

-when they become too bulky Yes/No

23 Who decides when files should be closed? (specify rank)

24 Does the registry maintain a list of closed files?

Yes/No

25 Are the closed files easy to retrieve for reference use?

Yes/No

26 Do you sometimes destroy records after they are closed?

Yes/No

27 Who decides which records should be destroyed (specify rank) _____

28 How is the decision made as to what should be destroyed:

-based on a retention /disposal schedule?

Yes/No

-based on lack of storage space? Yes/No

-based on appraisal or selection by the National Archives? Yes/No

29 Who manages policy files of the Ministry/Department?

- 30 How often are these files required for policy formulation and decision making?_____
- 31 Do you think the way these files are managed affects day-to-day decision making in the Ministry?_____
- 32 What essential documentation do you keep in the registry relating to development projects?_____
- 33 Is this information widely used and by whom?_____
- 34 What happens to the documentation after the project is completed?_____
- 35 Presently the Kenya civil service is undergoing administrative reform. How is the registry contributing to the Ministry's/Department's administrative reform programme?_____

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION WITH REGISTRY SUPERVISORS

REGISTRY OPERATIONS

- 1 What are some of the problems you encounter in your daily work as a registry supervisor?_____
- _____
- 2 Do you feel that you have the support of your senior officers in doing your work?_____
- 3 Do action officers ensure that files are returned to the registry after action has been completed?_____
- _____
- 4 Do they inform you when they pass a file to another officer?_____
- 5 Do they value the work the registry does?_____
- 6 Who do you report to?_____
- 7 What kind of information do you give to your line manager about your work?_____
- 8 Do you always feel satisfied with the action taken in response?_____
- 9 Do you have a job description? Are you clear about the work you should be doing?_____
- _____
- 10 What improvements if any have you tried to introduce in the registry to make your work efficient?_____
- _____

(a) What problems have you faced in trying to do so?

11 Given the opportunity what other changes would you introduce to your record keeping system?

12 What would you regard as the main advantages of your present record keeping system?

13 Has the introduction of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) had any effect on registry operations in your Ministry or Department? _____

14 Has it for example resulted in increased workload?

15 Has it affected the way you run the registry?

16 Has it resulted in a decrease in registry staff?

17 In what way do you think registry services contribute to the work performed by your Ministry or Department?

(a) To national development in general?

APPENDIX 5

PHYSICAL SURVEY FORM

This form is to be completed by the researcher. One form will be completed for each registry or section visited.

Part I

Registry or Section_____

Ministry or Department_____

Contact person_____ Designation_____

Completed by_____ Date_____

Part II

1 How is the registry organised:

open? Yes/No

confidential? Yes/No

other eg personnel or accounts? Yes/No

2 Number of people working in the registry?_____

3 Is the registry conveniently located and accessible to all users? Yes/No

4 How secure is the registry:

are file cabinets lockable? Yes/No

is entry controlled? Yes/No

are all wondows lockable? Yes/No

are all doors lockable? Yes/No

- 5 Delivery of mail to the registry:
 collected from the post office? Yes/No
 by courier? Yes/No
 fax? Yes/No
 telex? Yes/No
 E-mail? Yes/No
 other (specify)_____
- 6 How many officers have keys to the registry?_____
- 7 What do the records consist of:
 files? Yes/No
 cards? Yes/No
 microfilm? Yes/No
 photographs? Yes/No
 maps and plans? Yes/No
 computer disks? Yes/No
 other (specify)_____
- 8 Registry classification system used on the files:
 alphabetical? Yes/No
 numerical? Yes/No
 alpha-numeric? Yes/No
 other (specify)_____
- 9 File indexes:
 are they available? Yes/No
 are they up-to-date? Yes/No
 are they used regularly? Yes/No
- 10 How is file movement from the registry to action officers controlled?_____

- 11 What procedures are followed when an officer asks for a file?_____
- 12 Is a "Bring Forward" diary in use? Yes/No
- 13 Means of establishing files which have not been returned to the registry?_____
- 14 Type of storage facilities and equipment in the registry:
- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| metal cabinets (vertical)? | Yes/No |
| metal cabinets (lateral)? | Yes/No |
| wooden shelves and drawers? | Yes/No |
| metal racking and shelving? | Yes/No |
| other (specify)_____ | |
- 15 Is the storage equipment:
- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| adequate in quantity? | Yes/No |
| over-crowded? | Yes/No |
| in good condition? | Yes/No |
| efficient for use? | Yes/No |
- 16 Is the storage space in the registry:
- | | |
|--|--------|
| adequate for current records? | Yes/No |
| adequate for semi-current and non-current records? | Yes/No |
- 17 Common problems affecting records in the registry:
- | | |
|---|--------|
| filing backlogs? | Yes/No |
| misfiling? | Yes/No |
| delays in retrieving and tracking of files? | Yes/No |
| lost or missing files? | Yes/No |
| other (specify)_____ | |

18 Control and security of classified documents by the registry:

by use of lockable cabinets? Yes/No

by use of safes or strongrooms?

Yes/No

by use of a separate confidential registry?

Yes/No

handling by designated officers only?

Yes/No

19 Staff working in the registry:

Name -Grade -No of years in registry -level of training