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## Public Service Reforms: International Experiences

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## Structure of Presentation

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- II. Examples on international reform efforts
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- IV. Main Features of reform efforts:
  - Redefinition of the role of state
  - Enhancing public management performance
  - Promoting accountability and transparency
- V. Progress in each area of reform

## I. Introduction

- Major recent Public service reforms in SSA countries inspired by and have parallels in the public administrative reform experiences of other industrialized, developing and transition countries across the five continents.
- Administrative reform one of the major international phenomena of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century

## II. Examples of international reform efforts

- Big bang comprehensive state reforms in New Zealand (1980-1990) ;
- Radical transformation of administrative culture in the UK under M. Thatcher and her successors (1979-1998);
- Government performance & results action (1993) in the US

- TQM movements in several Asian countries;
- Decentralized management initiative in several Latin American countries.
- **Why concern with reform?**
  - Visionary leadership committed to nurturing a competent, accountable and honest administration

- Societal pressure for better quality services;
- The need to reduce budget deficits through improved economic performance;
- The need to respond to global changes (communication & information revolution, international trade and finance; external pressures, donors and super national obligations)

III. Driving forces of the public service reform efforts in SSA countries since early 1990s

- ✓ Economic reform
- ✓ Democratization
- ✓ The search for administrative efficiency in order to improve the quality of goods and services delivered to the public.

IV. Main Features of Reform Efforts

- Redefinition of the role of the state
- Introduction of efficiency measures to enhance public management performance
- Enforcing the accountability of the governors to the governed through increase transparency, openness and citizen participation.

**Redefinition of the role of state:**

- ▶ To ensure that it performs functions that should be at the level of the state while leaving other functions to sub-national governments and private and voluntary sector.
- ▶ Matching role to capability

● Basic Elements of the Redefinition of the Role of the State:

- ✓ governments to focus on basic functions: enforcing the rule of law, creating and nurturing a conducive environment for private sector development a conducive policy environment including macro-economic stability; investing in people and infrastructure; protection of the vulnerable and protection of the environment.

In short the public service reform sought to address the phenomena of weak and bloated states characterized by: high budget deficit, extensive involvement in the provision of goods and services, complex regulations that stifled private and voluntary initiatives. Emphasis also on performance measurement with partial attention to the delivery of services to the public.

**Measures for enhanced efficiency in public management performance:**

- ✓ Improvement of financial and personnel management systems with an emphasis on increased autonomy for managers;
- ✓ Pay reforms partly linked to performance;
- Continuous skills development and upgrading.

- The New Public Management (NPM) and influence on SSA countries
- NPM in full bloom by early 1990s
- Reform efforts in SSA countries influenced NPM whose Salient features were:
  - Applying market principles to government administration with an emphasis on competition, contracting and customer orientation

- Merit-based recruitment and promotion;
- Increased autonomy for managers with corresponding responsibility;
- Performance related pay and continuous skills development and upgrading; and
- Emphasis on performance measurement with partial attention to the delivery of services to the public

- New Zealand as a pioneer in NPM
- Reform involved
  - restructuring of SOEs, downsizing of the core public service, privatization and deregulation. Core public service staff reduced from 88,000 to 35,000 within 5 years.

- Transferring policy implementation functions to outside agencies with ministries and central government departments concentrating on policy planning, contracting and monitoring of performance.
- In spite of many SSA countries adopting similar reform strategy, results achieved were not similar.

- Why differences in success?
- New Zealand had:
  - strong political and bureaucratic institutions with strong leadership commitment, well established traditions of transparency, accountability and honesty;

- Abundant human capacity
- Comprehensive strategy to guide the reform effort.

In contrast, SSA countries characterized by weak institutions implying strengthening their capacity to deliver basic governmental functions and shedding functions that could be better performed by the private sector and voluntary organizations. developing and strengthening public sector institutions for better performance and deregulation, privatisation, contracting and decentralization.

- Downsizing another key reform area necessitated by the need to reduce budget deficits and reduce civil service staff numbers and the wage bill.
- Was SAP conditionality.

### V. Progress in Reform

**Downsizing :**

- Results achieved modest some retrenched staff without significant reduction in wage bill; few achieved both wage bill reduction and staff retrenchment (Ghana, Namibia, Uganda)

- In some half-heartedly done due to lack of political will and inability to mobilise funds for severance programmes (Malawi, Senegal, Zambia).
- Function review of Ministries carried out by external experts with little participation ignored (Benin);
- Where there was local ownership, exercise lacked thoroughness and results largely unsatisfactory (Senegal, Tanzania).

- Modernization of public Management Systems for improved performance**
- Tanzania created British style executive agencies responsible for policy formulation and the management of contracts arrangements with executive agencies;

- South Africa, Uganda transferred some activities out from ministries and departments to private contractors (Laundry and food supply from hospitals, office cleaning and security)

**Modernization of Human Resources Management**

- Recognition of a need for merit-based recruitment and promotion;
- Attention to incentives to motivate staff notably through merit pay;
- Balancing merit-based recruitment with considerations of representation in multi-racial and ethnic contexts

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- Gender balance (Chad, South Africa)

**Other HRM reform measures:**

- The taking of civil service census to obtain reasonable base line data on staff members;
- Establishment of a computerized personal data base that is linked to the payroll.

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**Modernization of the Financial Management System**

- Making budget systems more transparent;
- Linking budgets to development plans;
- Introduction of a medium term expenditure framework which helps to ensure a more strategic approach to resource allocation and management of the budget process and to enhance the governments capacity to control public spending ( Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda)

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- Strengthening of accounting and auditing capacity ( Ghana, Malawi, Uganda);
- Establishing of autonomous revenue authorities to increase revenue from tax and customs ( Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda)

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- **Skill upgrading**
- **Service delivery**
  - Service delivery surveys
  - Quality charters
  - Programme evaluation

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- **Promoting accountable and transparent governments:** linked to governance issues
  - Rule-based state;
  - election of leaders thru periodic free and competitive elections;
  - freedom of expression and association guaranteed by constitution and respected.

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• **Accountability: Elements**

- Ensure that both elected and appointed officials who manage the public service are accountable to the public;
- Respect for electoral legitimacy ;
- Internal control method (Hierarchical control, internal audit, code of ethics)
- External control(courts, parliament, media, ombudsman)

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• **Transparency**

- Emphasis on public access to government information and participation which enhances the impartiality and fairness of governmental administration;
- Promotes public participation in the administrative process ( Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania)

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