

**SECTION 4 IMPROVING PARTNERSHIPS
WITH ORGANISATIONS/
AGENCIES OUTSIDE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT**

- 4.1 Deregulation of controls and restrictions
- 4.2 Decentralisation of responsibilities and functions
- 4.3 Liaison with academic institutions

4.1 Deregulation of controls and restrictions

The context for change

The Deregulation Initiative started in 1992 within the context of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme. The intention is, as far as possible, to remove restrictions on economic initiatives. Deregulation forms part of a deliberate policy by the Government to support and stimulate business enterprise.

Implementing change

The central programme of deregulation is part of a larger series of reforms affecting: public finance; state enterprises and monetary policy; liberalisation of trade and payments; and domestic deregulation. Under domestic deregulation, there were requirements for developing an enabling environment for investment by removing price controls, allowing agricultural price policies to be determined by the market and by the amendment of labour laws to remove restrictions on employers.

Other deregulatory activities that have been undertaken include the following:

- Amendments to the Land Survey Act and Land Surveyors' Act to introduce greater flexibility.
- Amendments to transport regulations to allow competition.
- Amendments to the Companies' Act to remove the restrictions that a company can only be formed by at least two people.
- Amendment of Local Authorities' Legislation with the effect of decentralising the issuing of shop licences, etc.
- Amendments to Town Planning, Zoning and Building Standards to ease restrictions.
- Deregulation of the foreign exchange control mechanism.
- Deregulation of the labour laws to bring about free collective bargaining between employers and employees.
- Deregulation of the price control mechanisms in favour of trade liberalisation.

The policy document, "Framework for Economic Reform 1991", indicated a clear commitment by the Government of Zimbabwe to deregulation policies.

Supporting material

- (i) Deregulation Act 1993
- (ii) Deregulation and the Promotion of SSE in Zimbabwe, a report by Graham Bannock for the Government of Zimbabwe
- (iii) Framework for Economic Reform 1991, a Government of Zimbabwe policy document

4.2 Decentralisation of Responsibilities and Functions

Decentralisation in the Zimbabwe context means giving responsibilities to authorities outside Harare.

The context for change

In 1984, a statement of policy was issued on the directive to decentralise. The objective of the directive was to set up provincial structures for development. This development was anticipated to improve the quality of life of people, especially those in rural areas. The provincialisation process meant that the functions of governors were defined as political, consultative, developmental and co-ordinative. The eight provincial governors in Zimbabwe are political appointees who reside in their provinces. They chair meetings of various decentralised government departments, local authorities and community representatives. However, they have neither legal powers to enforce their decisions nor economic resources to use in achieving their objectives. The governors rely on persuasion to achieve their objectives. Although the governors are appointed by the government in power, their functions allow them to consult public servants and members of other political parties.

It is interesting to note that five years after this directive, the Public Service Review Commission of Zimbabwe (PSRC) made some important observations. For example, they criticised delays in decision-making by the central public service departments. Very particularly, they considered that the political governor had made little impact on how the public service bureaucracy delivered the service.

Implementing change

One of the main strategies adopted by Government to achieve its development objective of "Growth with Equity" is to create a more efficient public service through a decentralised public sector. A number of steps have already been taken to accelerate this process. Rural and District Councils have been amalgamated into 57 Rural District Councils in July 1993 and a Capacity Building Co-ordinating Committee established in November 1994. In addition, a pilot district support programme has been implemented to demonstrate the linkages between capacity building fiscal responsibility and local resource development efforts.

Key factors in the decentralisation process are the development of the human and financial resources capacities of the Rural District Councils to assume responsibility

in such areas as water, sanitation, telecommunications, roads, health and education.

Recognising the limited resources available, the Government is pursuing a more innovative approach to the provision of infrastructure in partnership with the private sector. This will be to encourage private participation in the form of "Build, Own, Operate and Transfer", "Build, Own and Operate" and joint ventures. The Minister of Finance in his Budget Statement to Parliament on 25 July 1996 proposed tax concessions on new projects for infrastructure development.

Although there has been decentralisation, senior public service staff are recruited and deployed centrally. The argument is that central recruitment and deployment reduces the chances of corrupt activities. However, it is argued increasingly that decentralisation can improve the quality of service, by providing local managers with the flexibility to adjust services to suit local conditions.

Decentralisation has often been a result of a demand for the particular service by the local community. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs' Department that issues birth and death certificates and passports was decentralised a few years ago following criticism of the service quality.

Supporting material

- (i) Public Service Review Commission of Zimbabwe, May 1989
- (ii) Public Service Workshop on Human Resources, January 1994
- (iii) Budget Statement to Parliament, 25 July 1996

4.3 Liaison with Academic Institutions

Universities and private training institutions play a significant role in national development. Collaboration between the public service and the universities in Zimbabwe takes various forms.

Senior civil servants are members of university senates. Their appointment to the university senates and their sub-committees is designed to ensure the courses offered by institutions of higher learning are relevant to the development needs of the country. While it is appreciated that universities should enjoy academic freedom to pursue their intellectual agendas, without interference from government, the universities in Zimbabwe cannot afford to ignore the needs of society. To this end, the universities offer various extension programmes designed to meet the needs of adults in various walks of life. Thus, the universities offer part-time courses for the benefit of civil servants such as computer training, adult education and financial accounting. University lecturers are deeply involved in extramural activities, which fall outside the formal programmes of the universities.

University faculty members sit on the boards of various parastatals and non-government organisations as well as in the private sector. Such involvement on the part of lecturers helps to cultivate common perceptions on problems and solutions facing the government and society at large.

The universities have participated in various ways in the current Civil Service Reform Programme. Some university lecturers have participated as consultants on the varied modules of the Civil Service Reform Programme such as financial management, training and performance management. Some national commissions of inquiries into such issues as land reform and social policy have been led by academics from the universities. All the teacher training colleges managed by government are affiliated to the University of Zimbabwe, which is the oldest in the country. The Zimbabwe Republic Police Staff College in Harare enjoys associateship status with the University of Zimbabwe. The same applies to the Domboshawa National Training Centre which offers a Diploma in Local Government Administration. In the near future, all agricultural colleges will also enjoy associateship status with the University of Zimbabwe.

While the relationship between universities and the public service are sound, there is room for improvement, so that the universities occupy a centre stage in the development process. They should deeply become involved in all the facets of the economic and social reforms now under way.