REPORT ON THE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS ON THE STATE OF HUMAN RESOURCE, GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

DECEMBER 2013
FOREWORD

The PSC has been constantly monitoring and investigating the management of human resources within the Public Service. In terms of its constitutional mandate, the PSC conducted a number of studies that looked at different elements of HRM in isolation. The need for such studies was informed by the implementation of a number of initiatives aimed at transforming the Public Service including the HRM.

During the 2008/09 financial year, the PSC conducted a study on the “Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Public Service” that looked at HRM in its totality. The mentioned study assessed progress made in terms of transforming the management of human resources. The findings of the study indicated that not much progress has been made in so far as the transformation of HRM in the Public Service is concerned.

Other reports produced such as the “Evaluation of the Consistency of Sanctions imposed for Misconduct in the Public Service”, “Evaluation of the Management of Grievances to Identify Good Practices” and “The Management of Precautionary Suspension in the Public Service” also identified various stumbling blocks in the transformation of human resource management, which has a direct impact on sound labour relations. In order to engage Senior Management members within the Public Service on the State of HRM, Grievance and Discipline Management in the Public Service, the PSC conducted roundtable discussions during October and November 2012 for all national and provincial departments.

The roundtable discussions were based on the four reports mentioned above and were an overwhelming success. Many challenges, best practice models and recommendations emerged through the open discussions which have subsequently been captured in this report. The PSC is pleased therefore to present to you the report on the “Roundtable Discussions on the State Human Resources, Grievance and Discipline Management in the Public Service”. It is trusted that the findings and recommendations made in this report will assist the Public Service Leadership in making policy decisions that will facilitate and improve the management of human resources and labour relations in the Public Service and ensure that HRM becomes a strategic partner within their organisations.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD ....................................................................................................................... i
GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS..................................................................................... iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ................................................................................................ 1

CHAPTER 1: ....................................................................................................................... 9
1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 10
1.2 Objectives of the roundtable discussions .............................................................. 11
1.3 Scope of project .................................................................................................... 11
1.4 The structure of the Report ................................................................................... 12

CHAPTER 2: ..................................................................................................................... 13
2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 14
2.2 Structure of the roundtable discussions ................................................................ 14
2.4 Attendance of the Roundtable Discussions .......................................................... 15
2.5 Summary .............................................................................................................. 19

CHAPTER 3: ..................................................................................................................... 20
3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 21
3.2 Analysis of findings of the discussions on the Report: Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management .......................................................... 21
3.3 Analysis of findings of the discussions on the Reports on the management of Grievances, Sanctions and Discipline in the Public Service .................... 27
3.5 Summary .............................................................................................................. 31

CHAPTER 4: ..................................................................................................................... 32
4.1 Recommendations .................................................................................................. 33
4.2 Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 34

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES
Table 1: Venues and dates of the discussions ............................................................... 15
Table 2: Departments and occupational categories affected by the OSD implementation ... 26

Figure1: Attendance at roundtable discussions ........................................................... 16
GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DPSA:</td>
<td>Department of Public Service and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDG:</td>
<td>Deputy Director-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG:</td>
<td>Director-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA:</td>
<td>Executive Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECSA:</td>
<td>Engineering Council of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE:</td>
<td>Employment Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPMDS:</td>
<td>Employee Performance Management and Development System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHWP:</td>
<td>Employee Health and Wellness Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR:</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRM:</td>
<td>Human Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRD:</td>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HoD:</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPCSA:</td>
<td>Health Professional Council of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR:</td>
<td>Labour Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRO:</td>
<td>Labour Relations Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPSA:</td>
<td>Ministry for Public Service and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPSC:</td>
<td>Office of the Public Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSD:</td>
<td>Occupation Specific Dispensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILIR:</td>
<td>Policy and procedure on incapacity leave and ill-health retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA:</td>
<td>Performance Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALAMA:</td>
<td>Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDP:</td>
<td>Personal Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC:</td>
<td>Public Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSCBC:</td>
<td>Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACAP:</td>
<td>South African Council for the Architectural Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACNSP:</td>
<td>South African Council for Natural Scientists Professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA:</td>
<td>State Security Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAQA:</td>
<td>South African Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMS:</td>
<td>Senior Management Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
1. INTRODUCTION

The roundtable discussions were conducted by the Public Service Commission (PSC) with a view to identify gaps and best practice models in the management of human resource, grievance and discipline management in the Public Service. Discussions in the Roundtables were preceded by a presentation of findings of four reports on the “Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management in the Public Service”, “Evaluation of the Consistency of Sanctions imposed for Misconduct in the Public Service”, “Evaluation of the Management of Grievances to Identify Good Practices” and “The Management of Precautionary Suspensions in the Public Service” as well as progress made to date in the various areas of human resource practices.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the roundtable discussions were to:

- Assess progress made in terms of the transformation of Human Resource Management (HRM), discipline and grievance management in the Public Service;
- Identify blockages that hamper the transformation of HRM and management of discipline and grievances in the Public Service;
- Create a platform for dialogue, share information, address common problems and harmonise the understanding of human resource and labour practices; and
- Make recommendations to advance the state of HRM, discipline and grievance management in the Public Service.

3. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

In total eleven roundtable discussions were held, two for national departments and one in each province. The delegates were from national and provincial departments, respectively.

4. FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES RAISED

Discussions at the various roundtables highlighted a number of concerns, challenges and achievements in the overall management of human resources. An analysis of the issues highlighted is captured according to the five key HRM dimensions.
4.1 Findings of the discussions on the Report: Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management

4.1.1 Human Resources Organisational Strategy and Planning

- **Departmental organisational designs and structures**

Departments are expected in respect of Sections B.2 and B.2A of the Public Service Regulations to consult with the Minister for Public Service Administration (MPSA) in terms of any proposed changes to the organisational structure at the top three tiers. A dominant challenge that arose from the discussions was the response time taken by the MPSA to make recommendations. Delegates stated that the delay compromised the functions of departments to fulfil their mandates effectively and efficiently.

- **Human Resource Planning**

Delegates stated that the template provided by the Department of Public Service Administration (DPSA), in the “Human Resource Planning Strategic Framework - Vision 2015 for the Public Service” is cumbersome and time consuming and the templates are completed for compliance. Human Resource plans are also not aligned to the strategic and organisational objectives of departments and line managers do not take responsibility for HR planning, hence the function becomes a responsibility of the HR units.

- **Employment Equity and Disability targets**

Although efforts are being made to employ persons with disabilities and females at SMS levels, the constant movement of these specific groups of employees poses a problem. People with disabilities are mostly employed as interns and not in permanent positions. The reason for this is that in some higher level posts it is difficult to find people with disability with adequate skills and competencies.

4.1.2 Human Resource Practices

- **Filling of posts and vacancy rate**

There was a general concern regarding the time it takes to fill posts and the high vacancy rate. The following were cited as some of the contributing factors:

- Delays in the candidate vetting process by State Security Agency (SSA);
• Delays in the verification of qualifications by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA);
• Re-structuring and re-configuration of departments specifically when there is a change of political and administrative heads;
• Meeting Employment Equity targets specifically in the case of gender and people with disability;
• Finding people with appropriate skills and competencies especially in the technical fields; and
• The job evaluation system is said to be flawed which causes further delays.

It was also cited that the high staff turnover due to movement to higher-paying positions in other public institutions and the private sector is another contributing factor.

• Retention of Staff

The lack of retention strategies contributes to departments being unable to retain skilled and talented employees. Retention strategies are limited to the ‘counter offer system’. Delegates stated that most employees are not keen on accepting the counter offer as the salary grading system applicable in the Public Service only addresses the question of the grading of higher salary notches as a means to retain employees and excludes the movement between post levels. This is seen as career limiting for those who have been offered notch progression as part of a retention plan.

• Management of relationship at the Executive Interface

Concerns were raised regarding political interference in the administration of departments. Executive Authorities were reported to be extremely influential in the management of human resources. The lack of HRM delegations (including withdrawals in cases where these were in place) particularly around the filling of posts is a major challenge. Concerns around the reluctance of EAs to delegate human resource functions and authority to their administrative leaders (DGs and HoDs) especially the filling of posts at lower levels (salary levels 1 to 12) were raised.

• Implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation

A dominant theme that emerged throughout all eleven (11) discussions suggested that there are many problems with the implementation of Occupation Specific Dispensations (OSDs). There was consensus in the various sessions that the implementation of the OSDs is fraught with challenges particularly around the question of interpretation and application. These
challenges are more evident specifically around the health profession and technical fields. This has led to departments being unable to recruit specialists in these areas.

- **Challenges associated with delays in finalising the job evaluation process**

It was noted in this instance that there is potential abuse of the job evaluation process. In this regard, concerns were raised on the selective use of the job evaluation system where the system is used to create senior positions for preferred persons.

### 4.1.3 Human Resource Utilisation and Development

- **Implementation of the Performance Management and Development System**

The efficacy of the *employee performance management and development system* (EPMDS) was questioned in the discussions. Of major concern was the fact that the individual performance assessment process does not take into account the overall organisational performance. There was a strong feeling that a recommendation should be made that performance management tools need to be reviewed so that they speak to the performance of the organisation as a whole.

### 4.2 Findings of the discussions on the Reports on the management of Grievances, Sanctions and Discipline in the Public Service

- **The management of grievances within departments**

The perception that labour relations practitioners appointed as Designated Employees are not objective since they are responsible for dealing with grievances as well as disciplinary matters emerged. It was noted that such subjectivity poses a challenge as Designated Employees should be objective in handling employee grievances. A serious concern raised, also for the PSC, was around Forum shopping by employees. In this instance grievances are lodged simultaneously with the PSC, the PSCBC and Sectoral Councils.

- **The management of discipline in the Public Service**

Delegates indicated that the delay in the finalisation of disciplinary cases in most instances is due to the following:

- Non availability of suitably trained employees to preside over disciplinary cases;
- Normal duties of presiding officers take precedence over disciplinary matters;
• Delays in the finalisation of disciplinary cases due to HoDs not attending to cases timeously;
• Political interference in the disciplinary process is problematic and comprises the disciplinary management process; and
• Advice provided by the Labour Relations units is not always taken into consideration.

• The management of precautionary suspension within the Public Service

The abuse of precautionary suspension throughout the Public Service impacts negatively on service delivery. In some instances it was noted that precautionary suspensions are invoked for reasons other than misconduct. It was also alleged that labour relations practitioners would be instructed to place a particular individual on precautionary suspension without sound reasons and proper procedures being followed.

It was further indicated that most departments do not have internal processes in place to manage precautionary suspension since they rely on the Disciplinary Code and Procedures for the Public Service, which do not provide a step-by-step process to be followed.

• The management of sanctions imposed

The inconsistency in the management of sanctions was highlighted in the discussions. The inconsistency has a serious effect on the application of discipline as well as the morale of employees, which in turn affects the performance of a department.

The role of EAs provided for in the Disciplinary Code and Procedures was also noted as problematic. The EAs as the Appeal Authority also influence the outcome of a sanction since they have the prerogative to either confirm or amend the sanction. This also has an impact on the consistency of sanctions as the Appeal Authorities are not always objective and, therefore, not consistent in applying their minds.

4.3 Absence and the lack of support from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

The DPSA as the custodian of policy formulation did not attend the roundtable discussions. As a result a number of questions raised could not be adequately responded to. Participants in the roundtables lamented the lack of support received from the DPSA. It was stated that officials from the DPSA do not respond on time or in some instances not at all to requests from departments. Departments receive very little assistance which is frustrating as they are unable to manage HR and LR effectively, especially in respect of policy formulation and the implementation thereof. Another concern was the issuing of directives by DPSA without
assessing the capacity of departments to comply. Some of the reporting templates from DPSA are cumbersome and time consuming, and are regarded as unnecessary. The PSC was implored to meet with the DPSA to address their lack of support to and cooperation with departments.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review of the Implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation

It was recommended that due to the numerous challenges besetting the OSDs, the PSC should host and facilitate a roundtable discussion with the DPSA, PALAMA, PSCBC, academia and affected departments to look at the possibility of reviewing the OSD as a matter of urgency.

- Departmental organisational design and structures

The PSC should hold an urgent meeting with the MPSA to draw attention to the challenges faced by departments when there is no timeous response to the advice being sought and the adverse effect this has on the alignment of organisational structures and design within departments.

- Human resource organisational strategy and planning

The PSC should engage the DPSA with the view to strengthen the human resource organisational strategy and planning capacity within the Public Service. Departments should ensure that human resource management becomes a strategic function which would assist in positioning HR practitioners as strategic partners.

- The implementation of the EPMDS

A further study should be conducted on the implementation of the EPMDS guidelines by the DPSA with the view to delink monetary gains from developmental aspect of the EPMDS.

- Employment Equity and Disability targets

The PSC should review the findings of previously published reports and compare them with the current situation taking into consideration emerging trends in respect of EE and disability targets. A study should also be conducted with all departments on the reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.
• The management of grievances within the Public Service

The PSC in consultation with DPSA and PALAMA (National School of Government) should put training programmes in place to ensure that grievances are dealt with adequately. The Guidelines on the Management of Grievances should be implemented uniformly across the Public Service and not be left to the discretion of departments to develop their own internal policies/procedures.

• The management of discipline in the Public Service

A database or dedicated unit of presiding/investigating officers should be established throughout the Public Service by DPSA or the Department of Labour. Persons serving in such a unit should have legal/labour relations background and relevant qualifications. The Disciplinary Code and Procedures should be amended by DPSA to provide for consistency of sanctions and Presiding Officers should comply with such a determination.

• The management of precautionary suspensions in the Public Service.

A uniform guideline/manual on dealing with precautionary suspension throughout the Public Service should be developed by the PSC.

4.5 CONCLUSION

The roundtable discussions provided the PSC with an insight into serious challenges experienced by departments in the management of HR and LR and highlighted the importance of sound management practices in a developmental state. The roundtable discussions confirmed that closer cooperation between departments is crucial in order for the Public Service to achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. Through the discussions it was evident that although departments have different mandates in terms of the management of HR and LR, the challenges are not different from one department to the other. Experience gained from the roundtable discussions indicates that the PSC needs to conduct their work in a way that would encourage the participation of departments in making the Public Service an employer of choice.
CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION
1.1 Introduction

The Public Service is duty-bound to provide services to its citizenry. In order to carry out this obligation, the Public Service depends on its human resources. This confirms the importance of human resources as the most critical resource in the achievement of service delivery. It is therefore important that this resource is managed in the most effective and efficient manner. It is for this reason that in terms of section 196 (4) (b) of the Constitution, 19961, read in conjunction with sections 9 and 10 of the Public Service Commission Act, 19972, the Public Service Commission (PSC) is empowered “to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organization, administration and personnel practices of the Public Service”. According to section 196 (4) (f)(iv) of the Constitution, 1996, the PSC may “of its own accord or on receipt of a complaint, advise national and provincial organs of state regarding personnel practices in the Public Service including those relating to the recruitment, appointment, transfer, discharge and other aspects of the careers of employees in the Public Service”.

During 2009, the PSC completed a report on the “Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Public Service”3. The report intended to provide a holistic assessment of the state of human resources within the Public Service. Emanating from its study, the report highlighted the fact that whilst there are a number of HR policies in place that seek to bring about transformation of HRM in the Public Service, progress to date has not been adequate. Performance management, delegations of authority, gender mainstreaming and the employment of people with disabilities are some of the issues that still remain a challenge that hampers progress of HRM transformation in the Public Service. The same emphasis was also placed on the management of labour relations in the Public Service. In 2008, the PSC produced a report on the “Evaluation of the consistency of sanctions imposed for misconduct in the Public Service”4 and in the 2011/2012 financial year produced two reports on labour relations, “The Report on the evaluation of grievances to identify good practices”5 and “The Report on the management of precautionary suspension in the Public Service”6.

Subsequently, the PSC in 2011 conducted workshops on the management of grievances and discipline for labour relations and human resource practitioners dealing with Labour

---

5 Republic of South Africa: Public Service Commission: Report on the evaluation of grievances to identify good practices, July 2011, Pretoria, South Africa
Relations (LR) within departments. The intention of the workshops was to alert the delegates to the findings of the abovementioned reports and advise them on the drafting of internal policies on dealing with grievances and discipline.

One of the key findings of the reports was the lack of commitment and support by senior managers in respect of human resource practices. Senior managers do not view human resources, grievance and discipline management as their core function thus abdicating their responsibility to the human resource and labour relations units. Due to the lack of ownership and responsibility, human resource management is not regarded as a strategic partner within departments. The PSC, therefore, conducted roundtable discussions for Senior Managers of all departments in order to impact strategic interventions that would transform the role of human resource management as a strategic partner in the Public Service.

1.2 Objectives of the roundtable discussions

The objectives of the roundtable discussions were to:

- Assess progress made in terms of the transformation of HRM, discipline and grievance management in the Public Service;
- Identify blockages that hamper the transformation of HRM and management of discipline and grievances in the Public Service;
- Enhance the efficiency in the management of human resources, discipline and grievances in the Public Service;
- Create a platform for dialogue, share of information, address common problems and harmonise the understanding of human resource and labour practices; and
- Make recommendations to advance the state of HRM, discipline and grievance management in the Public Service.

1.3 Scope of project

In total eleven roundtable discussions were held, two for national departments and one in each province. The delegates were from national and provincial departments, respectively.
1.4 The structure of the Report

The structure of the report is as follows:

**Chapter 2**: Presents proceedings and attendance of all eleven discussions.
**Chapter 3**: Presents the analysis of the issues and challenges raised during the discussions.
**Chapter 4**: Presents the recommendations and conclusion.
CHAPTER 2:

STRUCTURE AND ATTENDANCE OF THE ELEVEN DISCUSSIONS
2.1 Introduction

This section provides a synopsis of the presentations made and the attendance of the delegates. The invited delegates to the eleven roundtable discussions were planned to include top management from departments. Whilst many members of the Senior Management Service (SMS) attended, the PSC was concerned that very few HoDs attended.

2.2 Structure of the roundtable discussions

Four presentations were made, focusing on the report on the assessment of the state of human resource management in the Public Service followed by presentations on the reports on the evaluation of grievances to identify good practices, evaluation of consistency of sanctions imposed for misconduct in the Public Service and the management of precautionary suspension in the Public Service.

The presentation on the report on the assessment of the state of human resource management in the Public Service focused on the findings on the following five key dimensions of human resource management:

- Human Resource Organisational Strategy and Planning
- Human Resource Practices
- Human Resource Utilisation and Development
- Employee Health and Wellness
- Employee Relations

The findings/issues on employee relations were covered more extensively in the presentations and reports on grievances, discipline, sanctions and precautionary suspensions as mentioned above.

The reports on grievance and discipline management covered amongst others the issues that departments which participated in the respective studies identified as challenges when the studies were conducted. In addition, the latest information on how departments were progressing in respect of management of precautionary suspensions were also presented.

Once all four reports were presented delegates had an opportunity to discuss departmental challenges, share best practice models and generally seek clarity on the management of human resources, grievances, consistency of sanctions imposed for misconduct and the management of precautionary suspension in the Public Service.
2.3 Venue and dates of the Roundtable Discussions

The roundtables were held as follows:

**Table 1: Venues and dates of the discussions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National/provincial</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National and Gauteng</td>
<td>St Georges Hotel, Irene</td>
<td>02, 03 and 11 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>Labohang Building, Bloemfontein</td>
<td>16 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>Provincial Legislature Building</td>
<td>18 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>ICC, Protea Hotel, Regent</td>
<td>23 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>Public Service Training Academy, Durban</td>
<td>25 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>Protea Hotel</td>
<td>30 October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>Provincial Disaster Management Centre, Nelspruit</td>
<td>01 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>Legislature, Cape Town</td>
<td>06 November 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>Mmabatho Palms</td>
<td>08 November 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Attendance of the Roundtable Discussions

The discussion below provides an analysis of the attendance of the roundtable discussions by the PSC and departments, both at national and provincial levels.

2.4.1 Attendance by the PSC

The roundtable discussions were facilitated by PSC Commissioners and the DG of the OPSC. The national roundtable was attended by the Chairperson of the PSC who gave the opening address and the facilitation thereafter was conducted by the PSC Commissioners. In the provinces the Resident Commissioners gave the opening address and together with Head-Office based Commissioners facilitated the day’s proceedings.

2.4.2 Attendance of the roundtable discussions in national departments and provincial departments

It was intended that the discussions should be pitched at the highest level within departments. Thus each department was requested to nominate three participants to attend the roundtables. One of the nominees was to be a DG or HoD of each department accompanied by their senior HR and LR managers. **Figure 1** below provides an overview of the total number of participants for both national and provincial departments.
As indicated in Figure 1 above, a total of 70 (60%) delegates out of the expected 117 delegates attended. Of the 39 national departments that were invited, delegates from 33 departments attended. The following departments were not represented at the discussions:

- Department of Health
- Department of Military Veterans
- Department of Public Service and Administration
- Department of Tourism
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Women, Children and People with Disability.

The Director-General from the Department of Sports and Recreation was the only accounting officer who attended from all the national departments. Even though there was poor attendance from DGs, it was encouraging to note that senior managers on Deputy Director-General (DDG), Chief Director and Director levels were present and participated in the discussions. Most of the departments which could not send their senior managers made efforts to have officials from their HR and LR units to represent them. All the departmental representatives added value and quality to the deliberations that arose due to their practical experiences in issues that were being communicated by the PSC, even on broader PSC mandate.
(b) Provincial Departments

**Gauteng Province:**

The first discussion in the provinces commenced with the Gauteng province. Of the 33 expected delegates a total of 26 (78%) delegates attended. Delegates from the following departments did not attend:

- Department of Social Development
- Department of Local Government
- Department of Economic Development and Planning
- Department of Sports and Recreation

The highest level of delegate to attend from the Gauteng province was on DDG level. There was no attendance from HoDs. The delegations from the Departments in Gauteng comprised a number of senior managers as well as officials from the HR and LR units.

**Free State Province**

All 12 departments in the Free State province were represented at the discussions. Of the expected total of 36 nominated delegates, 30 (83%) attended the discussions. The HoD of the Department of Rural Development was the only accounting officer who attended. The rest of the delegates comprised of senior managers and officials from the HR and LR units.

**Northern Cape Province**

In the Northern Cape Province all 12 departments were represented with a total of 34 delegates (94%) attending from the expected 36. Two HoDs from the Departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Transport, Safety and Liaison were also present. The rest of the delegation comprised of senior managers and officials from the HR and LR units.

**Eastern Cape Province**

Thirty one delegates (79%) of the expected 39 from the 13 departments in the Eastern Cape Province attended the discussions. There was no attendance from a HoD in the Eastern Cape; however senior managers and officials from the HR and LR units were present.
KwaZulu-Natal Province

Of the 14 departments in the KwaZulu-Natal Province, 12 departments attended. The two departments that failed to attend were the Departments of Education and Public Works. Twenty four (57%) of the 42 expected delegates attended the discussions and the highest level of management was a DDG. The rest of the delegations were senior managers and officials from HR and LR units.

Limpopo Province

Of the 12 departments in the Limpopo Province the Department of Provincial Treasury did not attend. Twenty five (69%) of the 36 expected delegates attended the discussions. The delegates comprised of a DDG from the Office of the Premier, senior managers and officials from the HR and LR units. It must also be noted that there was also attendance from the tertiary institutions in the province and the legislature.

Mpumalanga Province

Ten of the 12 departments in the Mpumalanga Province were represented at the discussions. The Departments of Health and Social Development did not attend. From the 36 expected employees only 20 (55%) delegates attended with the exception of one person at Chief Director level, the rest of the delegates where junior officials. Therefore, the level of participation was not as expected as most of the delegates failed to respond to the presentations or questions posed. The Chief Director present responded on behalf of the entire delegation. A further concern was that the PSC, on arrival at the venue, had to telephonically contact delegates to attend as there were only two departments that were present at the start of the discussions.

Western Cape Province

All 12 departments in the Western Cape Province attended with a total of 37 delegates. It must be stated that out of the 11 roundtables held throughout the Public Service the Western Cape Province was the only province where 7 HoDs and the DG of the province attended. The other delegates comprised of senior managers. Due to the level of participation, in comparison to the other provinces, the discussions dealt with issues of a strategic nature. It also gave the PSC the opportunity to appreciate the concerns and challenges faced by accounting officers when dealing with human resource and labour relations matters.
North West Province

Nine of the 12 departments were represented at the roundtable. The three departments that did not attend were the Office of the Premier and the Departments of Economic Development, Environment Conservation and Tourism and Local Government and Traditional Affairs. Of the 36 expected employees only 16 (44%) delegates attended. The highest level of participants was at Chief Director and the rest of the delegates were senior managers and officials from the HR and LR units.

2.5 Summary

The overall attendance from all departments for the 11 roundtables was satisfactory. Of the 447 expected to attend, 313 (70%) of delegates attended which showed commitment and dedication from departments. The high level of attendance for the entire duration of the roundtables gave rise to positive and meaningful engagements. This also continued during the breaks amongst the delegation of the different departments, other attendees and the PSC team.
CHAPTER 3:

FINDINGS AND CHALLENGES RAISED
3.1. Introduction

The presentation of the four reports provided the delegates with the findings of the studies conducted by the PSC as well as progress made to date in the various areas of human resource practices. This generated a source for delegates to raise their concerns, challenges and achievements in the overall management of human resources. An analysis of the findings emanating from the discussions after the presentations were made is captured in below in this chapter as per the reports and the five key HRM dimensions.

Paragraph 3.2 provides an analysis of the discussions based on the Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management report whilst paragraph 3.3 provides the analysis of the discussions based on the reports on the Management of Grievances, Sanctions and Discipline in the Public Service and the Management of Precautionary Suspensions in the Public Service.

3.2 Analysis of findings of the discussions on the Report: Assessment of the State of Human Resource Management

The analysis below provides an overview of the key thematic issues that arose from the roundtable discussions. These issues were viewed as impediments in the effective and efficient management of human resources in departments. The following are a consolidation of the findings of the roundtables discussions as many of the issues raised was found to be repetitive.

3.2.1 Human Resources Organisational Strategy and Planning

The following issues relating to the organisational strategy and planning in the Public Service were highlighted in all of the roundtable discussions-

- Departmental organisational designs and structures

Sections B.2 and B. 2A of the Public Service Regulations, 2001; as amended, read in conjunction with the directive issued in terms of section 3(3) (e) of the PSA, 1994 indicates that “an EA shall, based on the strategic plan of the department, determine after consultation with the Minister for Public Service Administration (MPSA), the department’s organisational structure in terms of its core and support functions”.

In this regard, an Executive Authority (EA) is expected to consult with the MPSA in terms of any proposed changes to the organisational structure if such changes relate to the top three
tiers, namely, the levels of DG/HoD, DDG and CD of a department. A dominant matter that arose from the discussions was the time taken by the MPSA to provide departments with advice on the departmental organisational structures and designs. Some delegates stated that their department structures have been submitted to the MPSA almost two years and they are still awaiting a formal response.

Delegates indicated that this delay has a serious impact on service delivery. In order to ensure continuity of their strategic objectives, delegates indicated that they had proceeded with the implementation of their organisational structures without receiving the necessary feedback from the MPSA. Delegates stated that this was not an ideal situation as this results in the organisational structures not being aligned to the organisational objectives of departments. This further undermines the capacity of the departments to deliver on their mandate. It is important to note that this challenge was ascribed to, amongst others, the constant restructuring of departments whenever there are changes at the political and/or administrative levels.

In many instances these restructuring processes tend to follow the preferences of the political and/or administrative principals instead of government and the departmental strategic priorities. This has created a situation where most organisational structures are not fit for purpose with dire consequences for service delivery. The PSC was requested to give this area serious attention in order to develop sustainable solutions.

- Human Resource Planning

In order for a department to carry out its mandate efficiently HR planning is critical in ensuring that an organisation has adequate skills and capacity that are aligned to the organisational structure and design. In 2008, the DPSA published the Human Resource Planning Strategic Framework-Vision 2015 for the Public Service. The main purpose of the Strategic Framework-Vision 2015 is to give an overview of all aspects involved in HR planning and to guide HR planning processes in the Public Service. The framework provides departments with assistance to develop and implement strategies, tools and interventions to achieve their strategic objectives as well as Government’s Programme of Action. Some of the tools and interventions include templates which were designed to assist departments when preparing their HR plans. However, delegates indicated that these templates are cumbersome and time consuming. At the end these templates are completed and submitted for compliance, thus defeating the real purpose and objective for the need of HR plans. They

---

further stated that line managers do not take responsibility for HR planning and it becomes the responsibility of the HR units. In most instances the HR plans are not always aligned to the strategic and organisational objectives of the department. This then impacts on the organisational structure and design of departments which then affects service delivery.

- Employment Equity and Disability targets

Concerns were raised regarding disability targets that are not being met as well as the inconsistencies regarding Employment Equity (EE) targets. The delegates stated that as much as efforts are being made to employ persons with disabilities and females in SMS levels, the constant movement of these specific groups of employees pose a problem. This have led to a situation where departments are unable to meet the number of women and people with disabilities as set by Cabinet. The other concern was that people with disability were mostly employed as interns and not in permanent positions. The reason provided by delegates was that in some of the higher level posts it was difficult to find disabled persons with adequate skills and competencies required for such positions.

Delegates noted that the PSC had undertaken a study in 2008 on the “Assessment on Disability Equity in the Public Service”. The study attempted to provide a better understanding of the challenges and successes encountered by the Public Service leadership in achieving the disability equity. Delegates agreed that soon after the study, some progress in terms of attempts to achieve the stipulated targets (both in terms of gender and disability) was noted. However, since then, targets have once again dropped. The other reason cited for non-compliance was the lack of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities within departments.

3.2.2 Human Resources Practices

The following issues relating to the human resource practices were highlighted in all of the roundtable discussions-

- Filling of posts and vacancy rate

There was a general concern regarding the time it takes to fill vacant posts and the high vacancy rates. These emerged as key contributing factors hampering the ability of departments to perform, and deliver services. Delegates concurred that there is a myriad of challenges associated with the ability of departments to attract suitable candidates and to fill vacant posts within the prescribed three months. Some of these challenges were as follows:

---

• Delays in the candidate vetting process by State Security Agency (SSA);
• Delays in the verification of qualifications by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA);
• Re-structuring and re-configuration of departments specifically when there is a change of political and administrative heads;
• Meeting Employment Equity targets specifically in the case of gender and disabled persons;
• Finding people with the appropriate skills and competencies especially in technical fields; and
• The job evaluation system is said to be flawed which causes further delays;

It also emerged that some departments were experiencing high staff turnover due to employees moving to higher-paying positions in other public institutions and the private sector. The ability to attract and retain staff in scarce/critical skilled occupations also poses a huge challenge. Lastly, in some provinces, delegates stated that the moratorium on the filling of posts placed by EAs also contributed to the high number of vacancies. This is further compounded by failure in most departments to fill posts within the prescribed four months period.

• Retention of Staff

It was noted that the lack of retention strategies also contributes to departments being unable to retain skilled and talented employees. The issue of proper retention strategies is seen to be exacerbated by the fact that departments are restricted in terms of viable options available in retaining competent staff. Retention strategies are limited to the ‘counter offer system’. Delegates stated that most employees are not keen on accepting the counter offer as the salary grading system applicable in the Public Service only addresses the question of the grading of higher salary notches as a means to retain employees and excludes the movement between post levels.

This is seen as career limiting for those who have been offered notch progression as part of a retention plan. This has also been complicated by the fact that in some instances employees are offered salaries of a higher post whilst occupying a lower level position, with the result that they find themselves placed on a personal notch in order to be retained. Such employees have often found that the prospects of future growth are adversely affected. They are also at a disadvantage when matters of pay progression are dealt with following the performance management process.
Management of relationship at the Executive Interface

Delegates raised concerns regarding political interference in the overall administration within departments, and alleged that such interference was due to lack of trust, suspicion and abuse of power by EAs. The influence EAs in the management of human resources was allegedly prevalent. It was noted that the latter is mostly as a result of a lack of HRM delegations (including withdrawals in cases where such was in place) particularly around the filling of posts. Delegates raised grave concerns around the reluctance of EAs to delegate to their administrative leaders (DGs and HoDs) the human resource delegations, in particular the filling of posts especially at lower levels (salary levels 1 to 12).

Implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation

A dominant theme that emerged throughout all eleven (11) discussions suggested that there are many problems with the implementation of Occupations Specific Dispensation (OSDs)\(^9\). Delegates from various sessions concurred that the implementation of OSDs is fraught with challenges particularly around the question of interpretation and application. These challenges are more evident with the OSD, specifically around the health profession and technical fields. This has led to departments being unable to recruit specialists in these areas.

It is an OSD requirement that technicians and engineers should be professionally registered with a professional body before a Department can recruit or translate specialists in terms of the OSD. Likewise, scientists and professionals are expected to be registered and admitted by their respective regulatory bodies such as South African Council for the Architectural Profession (SACAP) and the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions (SACNSP). The registration fees to these professional bodies are extremely high, and as such certain categories of these professionals cannot afford to register which impacts on the recruit and retention of such individuals.

It is important to note that clause 4.1 of Public Service Co-ordination Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 1 of 2007 revised Occupational Specific Salary Structures provides for the negotiation and implementation of the OSDs per identified occupation to attract and retain professionals and other specialists. As per clause 4.2 and 4.3, the principles of the revised occupation specific salary structures are to develop new salary structures with the aim of improving the Public Service's ability to attract and retain skilled employees. Table 2

---

below provides the names of departments and their occupational categories that are most affected by the implementation of the OSD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Occupational category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</td>
<td>Agriculturalists, Veterinary Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
<td>Health professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Department of Public Works</td>
<td>Engineers, Technicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Department of Transport</td>
<td>Engineers, Technicians</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2: Departments and occupational categories affected by the OSD implementation*

It is important to note that the list provided above is not exhaustive.

- **Challenges associated with delays in finalising the job evaluation process**

Delegates indicated serious challenges experienced regarding the potential abuse of the job evaluation process. In this regard, concerns were raised on the selective use of the job evaluation system where the system is used to create senior positions for preferred persons. Emanating from the fact that the job evaluation system has been decentralised to departments, and this has opened up the system to abuse.

### 3.2.3 Human Resource Utilisation and Development

The following issues relating to human resource utilisation were highlighted in all the roundtable discussions-

- **Implementation of the Performance Management and Development System**

The majority of delegates raised concerns around the efficacy of the *employee performance management and development system* (EPMDS)\(^\text{10}\). The concern raised was that the individual performance assessment process does not take into account the overall organisational performance. For instance, delegates argued that there are known cases where the organisation will pay performance bonuses to officials even though the Department is performing poorly. It was also stated that in some departments, a qualified audit report will be received, but senior managers are awarded performance bonuses. It was argued that the performance management tool needs to be reviewed such that it speaks to the performance of the organisation as a whole.

It is important here for the PSC to draw attention to the fact that a qualified audit opinion should not simply on its own preclude the awarding of performance incentive to everyone in the department. Such an audit opinion may be an indicator of problems in the department but may not indicate similar challenges in all cases. It is important that the process of performance management is rigorous, fair and consistent in order to allow deserving employees to be awarded incentive while exposing and dealing effectively with poor performers.

A further challenge raised was the lack of correlation between performance assessment and workplans/Performance Agreements (PAs) whereby in some instances officials were assessed on functions that did not form part of their workplan or performance agreements. Delegates raised a concern that officials often have a misconception that they have a right to qualify for a bonus and do not regard the EPMDs as a tool to be utilised for developmental purposes. It was proposed that there be a separation of the monetary rewards from the developmental aspect of the system. Delegates also proposed that there should be standardisation across the board in respect of the criteria for allocating scores.

It was further indicated that the success of the EPMDs depends on the management of the policy. The reluctance by line managers to deal with poor performance, has led to dissatisfaction from the officials who have to carry the added workload resulting from the incompetence of their colleagues. This lack of appetite by line managers to deal with poor performance has impacted negatively on productivity and service delivery. It was further noted that line managers often abdicate this responsibility to the human resource unit.

It is important to indicate that delegates were informed that the DPSA is currently in the process of reviewing the EPMDs with the view to addressing the challenges currently besetting the system.

3.3 Analysis of findings of the discussions on the Reports on the management of Grievances, Sanctions and Discipline in the Public Service.

The analysis below provides an overview of the fifth dimension of HRM; that is; Employee Relations. It covers the key issues that emerged from the discussion focussing on matters that departments viewed as impediments to effective and efficient management of discipline and grievances in departments. These issues include the following-

- **The management of grievances within departments**

Delegates indicated that there is a perception that labour relations practitioners appointed as Designated Employees are not objective since they are responsible for dealing with
grievances as well as disciplinary matters. Such alleged subjectivity poses a challenge as Designated Employees should be objective in handling employee grievances. It was also stated that the appointment levels of Designated Employees are mostly at a lower level, which makes it difficult for them to “assert the necessary authority especially when the grievance is against a more senior official”. It is therefore imperative that such employees be affirmed by the HoD (this does not necessarily mean the Designated Employees must only be of higher post levels).

Furthermore, delegates also noted an apparent failure by line managers to take grievances seriously and deal with such grievances judiciously. Managers often regard the function of dealing with grievances as the responsibility of LR/HR practitioners, which results in the delays in finalising grievances. It was agreed that since grievance handling is regarded as one of the functions of line managers to maintain discipline, grievance management should be added to their workplans either as one of the KRAs. It was further suggested that during the interviews for positions at SMS level, candidates should be tested in the handling of grievances. This was seen as critical given the noted concern that many departments do not follow proper procedures as outlined in the Grievance Rules as gazetted. Many employees are also not adequately informed by departments or the unions about the correct procedures in the case of a grievance.

Forum shopping by employees is problematic as they lodge their grievances simultaneously with the PSC and the PSCBC and Sectoral Councils. There is a need for the PSC to engage with the PSCBC to ensure that grievances lodged with the councils prior to the internal process having been completed, are not dealt with by the councils. Delegates indicated that they experienced serious challenges in dealing with grievances of SMS members lodged against the HoD, since managers do not want to become involved in investigating grievances lodged against the HoD. In these instances, investigating officials from another Department are appointed, which results in the timeframe not being met. Delegates further enquired on the implementation of recommendations made by the PSC in respect of grievances. It was generally the opinion that the PSC should put in place measures to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

Although the PSC recommended that departments should draft their own internal procedures for dealing with grievances, delegates were of the opinion that the Guidelines for dealing with grievances should be compulsory throughout the Public Service to ensure standardisation.
The management of discipline in the Public Service

Delegates indicated that the delay in finalisation of disciplinary cases in most instances is due to the non-availability of suitably trained employees to preside over disciplinary cases. This is worsened by the lack of adequate training in the field of labour relations. It was further noted that employees appointed as presiding officers have their normal duties to perform, which takes precedence over disciplinary matters. They are therefore, reluctant to accept the additional responsibility of presiding or investigating disciplinary matters and thus, relegate the finalisation of such matters to the end of their functions.

Delays in the finalisation of disciplinary cases were also ascribed to HoDs not attending to these cases timeously. Delegates agreed that political interference in the disciplinary process is problematic as it compromises the disciplinary management process. It was alleged that EAs ‘cherry pick’ cases based on the individual involved. In some cases, alleged perpetrators would not be subjected to a disciplinary enquiry because of their political connection, whilst another employee having committing a similar offence will be prosecuted. It was suggested that EAs should not be involved in the disciplinary process. Delegates also alleged that labour relations officers would be instructed by an EA to get rid of a particular employee, and because of fear of victimisation, labour relations often act on such instructions. In some cases, employees are charged with misconduct without the involvement of the labour relations unit, whilst in other cases, the advice provided by the labour relations unit is not taken into consideration.

The management of precautionary suspension within the Public Service

The abuse of precautionary suspension throughout the Public Service, impacts negatively on service delivery. An example of such abuse mentioned by delegates was in respect of a department with a complement of fourteen SMS members, of which ten were placed on precautionary suspension. Due to the negative impact their suspension had on service delivery, the SMS members were requested to return to their offices.

Delegates alleged that precautionary suspensions are in some instances invoked for reasons other than misconduct. It was alleged that labour relations practitioners would be instructed to place a particular individual on precautionary suspension without sound reasons and proper procedures being followed. The following examples of such misuse were given:

• Employers do not provide employees with an opportunity to submit representations against the intention to suspend.
• Employees placed on precautionary suspension for a period longer than the prescribed sixty days with no extension being communicated to the affected employees.

• The use of external agencies to investigate alleged transgressions. It was alleged that this may be regarded as fruitless expenditure considering the cost incurred per case.

It was also indicated that most departments do not have internal processes in place to manage precautionary suspension since they mostly rely on the Disciplinary Code and Procedures for the Public Service, which do not provide a step-by-step process to be followed.

• The management of sanctions imposed

The inconsistency in the management of sanctions was highlighted by delegates. Delegates confirmed that there are known cases where presiding officers would pronounce different sanctions for similar offences. The inconsistency has a serious effect on the application of discipline as well as the morale of employees, which in turn affects the performance of a department.

A disconcerting aspect that was raised was that in some instances the DG/HoD would instruct the presiding officer to change the sanction, either making it more severe or reduce it, depending on who the employee was. The interference by the DG/HoD results in the inconsistent implementation of sanctions. This also impacts on the morale of presiding officers’ appointed to preside over a case and their reluctance to assist with disciplinary matters.

Delegates alleged that the appeal system provided for in the Disciplinary Code and Procedures were problematic as the EA as the Appeal Authority also influences the outcome of a sanction. The prerogative lies with the Appeal Authority to either confirm a sanction or amend the sanction. This also has an impact on the consistency of sanctions since the Appeal Authority is not always objective and therefore, not consistent in applying their minds.

3.4 Absence and the lack of support from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

The PSC and the delegates noted with concern that DPSA as the custodian of policy formulation did not attend the roundtable discussions, specifically since some of the questions raised could only be addressed by DPSA. A general consensuses raised by delegates was the lack of support received from the DPSA. They stated that officials from the DPSA do not respond on time or in some instances not at all. Departments receive very little assistance which is frustrating as they are unable to manage HR and LR effectively,
especially in respect of policy formulation and the implementation thereof. The DPSA issues directives without realising the difficulties of departments having to meet certain targets. Some of the reporting templates are cumbersome and time consuming, and are regarded as unnecessary. Delegates alleged that they complete templates merely for the sake of complying in order to meet deadlines. It was urged that the PSC should meet with the DPSA to address their lack of support to and cooperation with departments.

3.5 Summary

In essence all departments felt that HR/LR practitioners do not have the power to carry out their functions. The advice provided in respect of Job Evaluation, OSDs, EPMDS, recruitment and selection in many cases is disregarded and this stems mainly from the delegations lying with the EA. Line Managers do not see HRM as part of their core business and tend not to deal with issues pertaining to human resources or labour relations management. Generally there is a lack of capacity in the HRM and LR units to deal with the issues thus resulting in a lack of confidence in the HRM and LR units. HRM reporting to DPSA etc. becomes merely a means of compliance as there are no proper strategic alignment of the HRM to the strategic objectives and organisational design of departments. HRM is not seen as a strategic partner but merely a support function and thus does not share the same importance as Finance and Supply Chain Management (SCM) as there is no proper accountability in place for HODs for non-compliance in respect of the various HRM practices.
CHAPTER 4:

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION
4. INTRODUCTION

Taking into account the available information that emerged from the discussions in the previous chapter as well as the challenges that have been highlighted, this chapter provides the recommendations to improve the state of human resource management in the Public Service.

4.1. Recommendations

- **Review of the Implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation**

  It was recommended that due to the numerous challenges besetting the OSDs, the PSC should host and facilitate a roundtable discussion with the DPSA, PALAMA, PSCBC, academia and affected departments to look at the possibility of reviewing the OSD as a matter of urgency.

- **Departmental organisational design and structures**

  The PSC should hold an urgent meeting with the MPSA to draw attention to the challenges being faced by departments where there is no timeous response to the advice being sought and the adverse effect this has on the alignment of organisational structures and design within departments.

- **Human resource organisational strategy and planning**

  The PSC should engage the DPSA with the view to strengthen the human resource organisational strategy and planning capacity within the Public Service. Departments should ensure that human resource management becomes a strategic function which would assist in positioning HR practitioners as strategic partners.

- **The implementation of the EPMDS**

  A further study should be conducted on the implementation of the EPMDS guidelines by the DPSA with the view to delink monetary gains from developmental aspect of the EPMDS.

- **Employment Equity and Disability targets**

  The PSC should review the findings of previously published reports and compare them with the current situation taking into consideration emerging trends in respect of EE and disability.
targets. A study should also be conducted with all departments on the reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

- **The management of grievances within the Public Service**

The PSC in consultation with DPSA and PALAMA (National School of Government) should put training programmes in place to ensure that grievances are dealt with adequately. The Guidelines on the Management of Grievances should be implemented uniformly across the Public Service and not be left to the discretion of departments to develop their own internal policies/procedures.

- **The management of discipline in the Public Service**

A database or dedicated unit of presiding/investigating officers should be established throughout the Public Service by DPSA or the Department of Labour. Persons serving in such a unit should have legal/labour relations background and relevant qualifications. The Disciplinary Code and Procedures should be amended by DPSA to provide for consistency of sanctions and Presiding Officers should comply with such a determination.

- **The management of precautionary suspensions in the Public Service**

A uniform guideline/manual on dealing with precautionary suspension throughout the Public Service should be developed by the PSC.

**4.2 Conclusion**

The roundtable discussions provided the PSC with an insight into serious challenges experienced by departments in the management of HR and LR and highlighted the importance of sound management practices is critical to a developmental state. The roundtable discussions confirmed that closer cooperation between departments is crucial in order for the Public Service to achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. Through the discussions it was evident that although departments have different mandates in terms of the management of HR and LR, the challenges are not different from one department to the other. Experience gained from the roundtable discussions indicates that the PSC needs to conduct their work in a way that would encourage the participation of departments in making the Public Service an employer of choice.