

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR SPEECH - REINVENTING
GOVERNMENT: A LOOK AT THE FOREIGN SERVICE**

**JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AND
HEADS OF MISSION/CONSULAR POSTS
MARCH 21,2000**

HON. MINISTERS, PERMANENT SECRETARY, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS,
AMBASSADORS, HIGH COMMISSIONERS, OTHER REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR
MISSIONS ABROAD, MEMBERS OF STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND FOREIGN TRADE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU ON THE TOPIC WHICH I WAS
AS SIGNED REINVENTING GOVERNMENT - A LOOK AT THE FOREIGN SERVICE.

I AM SURE YOU ARE ALL AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN
UNDERTAKING A NUMBER OF REFORMS IN SEVERAL AREAS. AS OUTLINED IN
MINISTRY PAPER NO.13 OF 1999 (WHICH I RECOMMEND THAT THOSE OF YOU
WHO HAVE NOT SEEN IT SHOULD READ), THESE AREAS INCLUDE: (A) THE
CONSTITUTION; (B) THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM; (C) THE CONDUCT OF THE
BUSINESS OF PARLIAMENT; (D) THE CONDUCT OF THE BUSINESS OF CABINET; (E)
LOCAL
GOVERNMENT; (F) THE DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION TO ENHANCE INTEGRITY IN
PUBLIC LIFE AND ANOTHER TO ENABLE A MORE OPEN GOVERNMENT; AND (G)
THE

PUBLIC SECTOR.

MINISTRY PAPER NO. 13 WENT INTO SOME DETAIL ON THE REFORMS BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR. THESE INCLUDED:

(A) A FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (FMIS) TO ENABLE THE PROVISION OF MORE TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION ON EXPENDITURES VIS A VIS PROGRAMMES, TO BE FOLLOWED BY AN INTEGRATED FINANCIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (IFMIS) WHICH WILL PROVIDE MORE TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION ON **EXPENDITURES VIS A VIS PROGRAMMES** AND REVENUES TO ENABLE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE ITS TREASURY MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS;

(B) A HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HRMIS) TO GIVE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGERS A BETTER TOOL FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING;

(C) THE CREATION OF EXECUTIVE AGENCIES, FOUR OF WHICH WILL SOON CELEBRATE THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF EXISTENCE, HAVING ACHIEVED OUTSTANDING SUCCESSES (ELECTORATE WITH SAME EXAMPLE);

(D) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL CONTRACTS COMMISSION TO OVERSEE A MORE TRANSPARENT AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF CONTRACT AWARDS AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CONTRACTOR GENERAL'S

OFFICE TO SUPPORT THE COMMISSION;

(E) IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICE;

(F) REVAMPING THE WORKINGS OF THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM OF THE
CABINET.

I COULD GO ON, BUT THE LIST ABOVE SHOULD SUFFICE TO INDICATE TO YOU
THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS.

THE FOREIGN SERVICE, HAS, OF COURSE, GOT TO BE PART AND PARCEL
OF THE REFORMS. SOME BENEFITS FROM “GENERIC” REFORMS SUCH AS THE
FMIS AND HRMIS SHOULD ALREADY BE EVIDENT. IF THIS IS NOT SO THEN WE
SHALL HAVE TO FIND OUT WHY.

IN REGARD TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE THERE ARE SEVEN MATTERS MORE
OR LESS SPECIFIC TO THE **MFAFT** (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN
TRADE) ON WHICH I WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT.

FIRST: SINCE REFORMS ARE BEING UNDERTAKEN IN OTHER
COUNTRIES WHERE WE HAVE REPRESENTATION, ESPECIALLY THE
COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES WITH WHICH SHARE TO SOME DEGREE THE
‘WESTMINISTER’ MODEL, I WOULD INVITE OUR REPRESENTATIVES TO MONITOR
THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA AND COMMUNICATE TO US THOSE WHICH
THEY JUDGE USEFUL TO OUR SITUATION. CONVERSELY, OUR OVERSEAS
REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD APPRISE THE RELEVANT PERSONS OVERSEAS

INCLUDING OUR DIASPORA, OF THE REFORMS

BEING UNDERTAKEN HERE, SO THAT THEY CAN APPRECIATE WHAT GOVERNMENT IS DOING TO

IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ITS GOVERNANCE.

SECOND: GIVEN THE EXTREMELY DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DETERMINE FROM TIME TO TIME WHETHER THE MINISTRY IS APPROPRIATELY EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH THE WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES WHICH IT IS LIKELY FACE. IT IS APPROPRIATE, AT THIS TIME ALSO BECAUSE THERE ARE NOW TWO MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE AREAS, RESPECTIVELY, OF THE MINISTRY.

TO THIS END, I FULLY SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW WHICH THE HONORABLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS DISCUSSED WITH ME A FEW WEEKS AGO. I KNOW THAT IT IS SOMETIMES IRRITATING TO SEEM TO KEEP REVIEWING THINGS; HOWEVER, THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE OPERATE REQUIRES THIS TO STAY RELEVANT.

THIRD: IN RESPECT OF THE MINISTRY'S DOCUMENT: **ROLE AND OPERATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE 1996-2000**, SOME OF YOU MAY KNOW THAT IT WAS ACCEPTED BY CABINET IN DECEMBER 1996. I TAKE IT THAT GIVEN THAT WE ARE IN THE YEAR 2000, THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REVIEWED TO: (A) DETERMINE HOW WELL THE OBJECTIVES SET WERE MET, IF AT ALL; AND (B) WHAT AMENDMENTS SHOULD BE MADE, IN LIGHT OF THE CURRENT AND LIKELY FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES.

THOSE WHO HAVE READ THE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY WILL RECALL AN IMPORTANT SECTION ENTITLED **MODERNIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETARY** SYSTEMS WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS: (A) CALLED FOR REPLACING THE TRADITIONAL ACCOUNTING PROCESS WITH A COMPUTERIZED ONE; AND (B) GIVING HEADS OF MISSIONS DISCRETION WITH CLEAR GUIDELINES TO ALLOCATE FUNDS EARNED TO MEET DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL COSTS.

IT WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTING TO KNOW HOW FAR WE HAVE ADVANCED IN THESE TWO OBJECTIVES, ESPECIALLY THE LATTER; AND, IF NOT, HOW SOON WE INTEND TO GET IT DONE.

I CAN ASSERT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS IN SUPPORT OF GIVING THE AGENCIES DISCRETION TO USE SOME OF THEIR EARNINGS FOR AGREED PURPOSES; AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE EXECUTIVE AGENCIES ARE OPERATING ON SUCH A BASIS BY AGREEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING.

FOURTH: WE SHOULD ALL BE AWARE OF THE REPORT OF THE **TASK FORCE ON REDUCING WASTE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR** (POPULARLY CALLED THE 'ORANE REPORT') WHICH HAS PARTICULAR RELEVANCE TO THE MFAFT IN COMMON WITH OTHER MINISTRIES BUT SPECIFICALLY IN RESPECT TO THE RATIONALIZING OF OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION. THIS INCLUDES MATTERS SUCH AS:

- (A) PLACES WHERE WE ARE REPRESENTED;
- (B) ACCOMMODATION INCLUDING SHARING WITH OTHER ENTITIES SUCH AS JAMPRO AND THE JTB;
- (C) THE CATEGORIES OF STAFF WHICH SHOULD BE RECRUITED FROM JAMAICA VIS A VIS OVERSEAS LOCATIONS; AND
- (D) THE SIZES OF MISSIONS.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT THE MFAFT LEADS THIS PROCESS OF REFORM IN A DETERMINED WAY SO THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT SEEN TO BE DRAGGING ITS FOOT IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA.

FIFTH: THE MATTER OF THE BUSINESS OF CABINET OF PARTICULAR RELEVANCE HERE IS THE CABINET **COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE.**

THIS COMMITTEE HAD ONLY FOUR MEETINGS DURING THE 1999/2000 FISCAL YEAR COMPARED WITH FIFTEEN OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE COMMITTEE.

A SIMPLE COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF MEETINGS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT SAY EVERYTHING, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT SUCH A COMMITTEE MEETS OFTEN. I RECOMMEND THAT THE HMFA AND HMFT LEAD IN MAKING THIS COMMITTEE A DYNAMIC ONE SO THAT: (A) OTHER MINISTERS IN THE GOVERNMENT AND SENIOR OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS CAN BE FULLY AWARE OF THE WIDE AND COMPLEX ISSUES THAT ARE INVOLVED; AND (B) IT CAN BE A PLATFORM TO INFORM THE WIDER COMMUNITY OF THE ISSUES.

SIXTH: I WISH TO RESTATE MY VIEW THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR
FOREIGN SERVICE

OFFICIALS TO BROADEN THEIR EXPERIENCE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE BY BEING
REQUIRED TO

SERVE IN SOME OTHER DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, FOR EVEN ON
RELATIVELY SHORT

TIME, ESPECIALLY THOSE DEPARTMENTS WHICH ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
SUBJECTS WHICH ARE VERY RELEVANT TO THE BUSINESS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND FOREIGN TRADE.

SOME EXAMPLES ARE MINSITRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMERCE, MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE, MINISTRY OF MINING AND ENERGY. IN OTHER WORDS,
WHILST NOT BEING AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF THE CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE
OFFICER, I DO THINK IT IS A BETTER POLICY TO HAVE A FOREIGN SERVICE
STAFFED BY OFFICIALS WHO HAVE HAD SOME EXPERIENCE IN PERTINENT
AREAS IN GOVERNMENT OUTSIDE OF IT.

SEVENTH: I THINK THE MAXIMUM USE MUST BE MADE OF OUR OVERSEAS
STAFF, AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SO AS TO REDUCE THE NECESSITY OF
LARGE ENTOURAGES, AND FREQUENT TRIPS FOR THE PURPOSE OF OVERSEAS
MEETING.

TO SUM UP, THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MOVING IN EARNEST TO 'REINVENT' GOVERNMENT THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF REFORMS ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

GIVEN ITS IMPORTANCE IN ASSISTING JAMAICA TO ACHIEVE ITS ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY MUST BE OF NECESSITY THE VANGUARD OF REFORMS.

THESE REFORMS INCLUDE THE 'GENERIC' ONES OF IMPROVING FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND REDUCING WASTE. BUT IN ADDITION THERE ARE SEVEN SPECIFIC AREAS WHICH I COMMEND FOR PRIORITY ATTENTION.

THESE ARE: (1) MONITORING THE DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPECT OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE WE ARE REPRESENTED AND COMMUNICATE THOSE JUDGED TO BE USEFUL TO US AND IN TURN TO BE APPRIZED OF THE REFORMS WE ARE UNDERTAKING AND COMMUNICATE THEM TO RELEVANT PARTIES ABROAD; (2) REVIEWING YOUR ORGANIZATION TO DETERMINE ITS APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE JOB AT HAND; (3) REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE 1996 POLICY DOCUMENT AND UPDATING IT; (4) SPEEDING-UP THE RATIONALIZATION OF OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION; (5) MAKING THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AN EFFECTIVE ONE; (6) A CONSIDERATION OF THE POSITION OF REQUIRING FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICIALS TO BROADEN THEIR EXPERIENCE BY SERVING SOME TIME IN OTHER RELEVANT

AREAS OF GOVERNMENT; AND (7) REDUCING THE NEED FOR FREQUENT ATTENDANCE OF LARGE ENTOURAGES TO ATTEND MEETINGS ABROAD.