



Public Sector Reform Unit (PSRU)
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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PRESS RELEASE

PSRU CONDUCTS A ONE-DAY SYMPOSIUM ON PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM INITIATIVES FOR FINAL YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The PSRU, in the Office of the President conducted a one-day Symposium on Public Sector Reform initiatives, in collaboration with the Academic and Career Advisory & Counselling Services Directorate (ACACS), Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone (USL).

The Symposium was held on the 20th January 2016, at the Mary Kingsley Hall, Fourah Bay College. The objective of the symposium was to share with students from USL the progress being made in various areas within the Public Service, enabling them to interact with serving Civil Servants and Public Officers and also to engage in a Q&A session. 150 students were invited from Fourah Bay College (FBC), Institute of Public Administration (IPAM) and College of Medicine & Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS).

The occasion was Chaired by Mr Abdulai Bayraytay, from the Office of the Government Spokesman and several panellist including, the Director, PSRU; the Director, Performance Management Service Delivery Directorate in the Office of the Chief of Staff, (PMSD); the Director, Performance Management, Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) and Representatives from the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Cabinet Secretariat.

The University of Sierra Leone was represented by the Vice Chancellor, University of Sierra Leone; the Deputy Vice Chancellor, FBC; the Deputy Vice Chancellor, IPAM and the Provost, COMAHS.

The Symposium was sculpted around the Pay and Performance Project (P&PP) which supports the higher level goals identified in the Flagship Public Sector Reform Programme, namely improving competitiveness in pay, performance management and accountability and increase recruitment (and retention) of middle level and senior staff in the Sierra Leone Civil Service.

In welcoming the panellists and students, Dr Taqui, Director, ACACS, explained the rationale behind the Symposium, and encouraged them to ask questions or seek clarification on any issue or concern. She said the symposium will also help potential graduates to make informed choices when seeking employment upon completion of their studies.



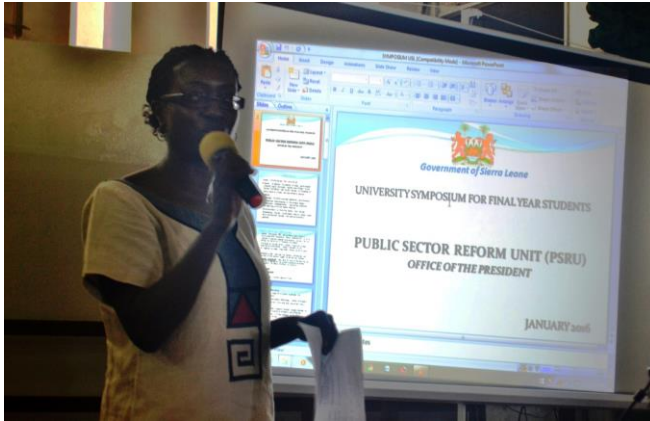
Dr (Mrs) Taqi, Director, ACACS making a statement

The Chairman, Mr Abdulai Baraytay in his opening statement informed the audience that the discussions will focus on updating them on public sector reforms and building their confidence needed to face the realities of employment in the public service in Sierra Leone. He urged the students to focus on their academic pursuits, so that they can give to the nation what is expected of them upon graduation. The Chairman also emphasised that the Symposium should be seen by students as a motivating tool to contribute towards national development.



Cross – Section of members of the Panel. Mr Abdulai Bayraytay, making his opening Statement

Giving an update on Public Sector Reform, **the Director, PSRU, Ms. Sidratu Koroma**, said the objective of the reforms is to ensure a lean, motivated, efficient, accountable, and professional public service for improved service delivery. She emphasised that the Civil Service should not be seen as the last resort for employment but rather as a first point of call for graduates pursuing employment, adding that this Symposium will be the first in a series of such engagements with final year students throughout 2016.



Ms. Sidratu Koroma, Director PSRU, making her presentation

The Deputy Vice Chancellor, FBC, Professor Ekundayo Thompson thanked the PSRU for such a brilliant initiative of informing and motivating potential graduates of the ongoing developments in the Public Service. He encouraged the students to take their studies very seriously. Outlining various reform initiatives currently being undertaken by the University itself, he lamented that, due to falling standards resulting from outrageous malpractices in the West African Senior Secondary School Examination (WASSCE), the University will now be conducting its own entrance examinations for students to ensure that every new entrant meet its standards. The Deputy Vice Chancellor said this new system will help in admitting high calibre students into the University.



Professor E Thompson, Deputy Vice Chancellor, FBC addressing the audience

Mr Daniel Braima, of the Public Service Commission (PSC) informed the audience that PSC has restricted itself to meet the daunting challenges of ensuring transparent and merit based recruitment process. He said the PSC has recruited hundreds of qualified and competent Sierra Leoneans into the Civil Service through a fair and credible process.

He encouraged the students after graduation to come forward and apply for positions for which they have requisite qualification without fear as jobs in the Civil Service are meant for qualified Sierra Leoneans - “After we shortlist you, you shortlist yourself”, he said.



Cross-section of students at the symposium

Various panellists spoke on the importance of Performance Management. **The Director, Performance Management Service Delivery Directorate (PMSD), Office of the Chief of Staff (Mr Abdul Rahman Sowa)** spoke on the importance of Performance Contracts, noting that Ministers and Senior Public Servants are obliged to sign Performance Contracts with his H.E the President in order to give account of their stewardship. He described the Performance Contracting process as a fair system which will enhance good governance.

Representing **Human Resource Management Office (HRMO), the Director of Performance Management, Mr. Osman Conteh** said they have signed Performance Contracts with senior Civil Servants (Permanent Secretaries and Professional Heads) and introduced the Individual Performance Appraisal System (IPAS) which was a vast improvement on the Annual Confidential Report to which the employee had little input. The IPAS will enable Civil Servants to perform better and be accountable. This in turn he said will enhance efficient and effective service delivery.

Mr L.B.O Massaquoi, Assistant to the Secretary to the Cabinet explained the history of Performance Management as a system introduced after the 2002 elections, with the introduction of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, by which efforts were made to integrate strategic planning into the annual budgeting framework in order to create a results-based public expenditure management process.

The presentations were followed by a lengthy interactive Q&A session during which students sought clarifications on various questions, including: *How fair is the current PSCs recruitment process in filling vacancies in MDAs? which mechanism does the new ICT cadre have in place to train potential graduates? What is the HRMO doing to ensure that civil servants retire at the age of 60 years and allow younger people an opportunity to work?*

These were ably answered by the relevant panellists. All the speakers underscored the timeliness of such initiative by the PSRU and encouraged the students to develop the passion to make their own contribution working in the public sector after graduation to enhance national development.

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