

MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. During the past two years the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), with assistance from the UK Department for International Development, has embarked on a programme of functional and management reviews in a number of key Ministries in the country. These reviews were linked to the GOSL's programme to promote good governance in the public service in order to restore efficiency and increase the capacity for the delivery of services to the population.

2. In a separate initiative, an organizational and structural review of the Ministry of Trade and Industry was undertaken in December 2002 by a consultant commissioned by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). The report was subsequently reviewed by the Steering Committee on Good Governance which, in principle, accepted the findings of the report but recommended to Cabinet that DFID be asked to conduct a more holistic review of the Ministry that would complement the work already undertaken but would be more consistent with the scope of the reviews in other ministries. This report covers a study carried out during May and June 2004 by a team of DFID consultants of the functions, structures and management arrangements at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

3. Over recent years, there has been a steady erosion of the Ministry's responsibilities for trade and industry issues to other ministries or government agencies. This changing and diminishing role together with a lack of sufficient manpower resources with relevant skills and expertise has exacerbated capacity problems within the organization. In the transition from a post-conflict environment to a growth economy, the Ministry has a key role to play in facilitating development of the private sector in Sierra Leone by promoting enterprise and by creating the enabling environment for encouraging business success. It also has a significant role to play in the development of economic activity in rural areas through the work of the Department of Cooperatives. It was equally evident that if the Ministry is to be in a position to achieve its objectives and create the desired conditions for business success and industrial development, a substantial injection of resources, especially manpower, will be necessary to tackle existing capacity problems and to enable it to meet its future commitments.

4. Our findings endorse the rationale behind the Ministry's and CFTC consultant's proposals to reorganize the Ministry and we have recommended a directorate structure should be adopted. We are also of the view that there is a need to establish a separate directorate to deal with consumer protection and competition issues, as the former subject in particular is attracting an increasingly higher profile in terms of public interest and debate.

5. In terms of the Ministry's future activities in the provinces, we believe it is premature at this stage to be considering a substantial expansion of existing activities outside Freetown until the structure and organization at the centre is fully operational and working effectively. In the longer term, the report recommends that the Ministry establishes a Working Group to address the question of its future representation in the provinces and, in particular, to define the functions and outputs involved and to identify the organizational structures, systems and resources required to support these activities.

6. Other key recommendations include:

- The need for the Ministry to prepare a strategic plan setting out its future role, the key challenges it faces, the areas it should focus its efforts to have the greatest impact and its strategic priorities.
- The role and functions of staff in the Trade and Industry divisions should be reviewed to ensure definition of responsibilities and clarity of purpose. Written job descriptions should be provided for all professional, administrative and clerical staff.
- Cooperatives should remain a separate unit within the Ministry for the time being but a review should be undertaken of the Department and this study should also examine its future relationship with the Ministry in view of the decentralization changes planned.
- The Ministry should review its procedures for handling procurement orders under Le25m to ensure they conform to government rules on public sector procurement.
- Meetings of the Senior Management Committee should be re-activated.
- The current practice of employing non-civil servants at the Ministry should be discussed with the Establishment Secretary's office in order to regularize the position.
- A training needs analysis should be completed as soon as possible and should be used as the basis for developing a training policy and plan for the Ministry.

7. The additional posts required by the Ministry in 2005 to support the new directorate structure have been assessed at 15 middle grade and senior posts including a new post of Director General. A breakdown of the other positions is provided in the report. In terms of priority, the two counterpart posts identified for the Policy, Planning and Research directorate should be filled as soon as possible.

8. A full list of our recommendations is overleaf.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Existing legislation in the trade and industry sectors, in particular the Price Tag Order 1956 and the Cooperatives Society Act 1977 should be reviewed and updated as necessary (Para 8.3);
2. If the Attorney General's Department is unable to provide the Ministry with its own in-house legal counsel, the Ministry should consider approaching donors to fund a post of legal counsel, at least as an interim measure (Para 8.4);
3. As part of any restructuring exercise the Ministry should review the roles and functions of staff in the Trade and Industry directorates to ensure definition of responsibilities and clarity of purpose (Para 8.5);
4. The role and job designation of the statistical clerks should be reviewed as a matter of priority and revised job descriptions prepared (Para 8.8);
5. The rationale behind the need to restructure the Ministry is accepted and a directorate structure should now be introduced (Para 8.12);
6. The Ministry's proposal to create a post of Deputy Director General of Trade and Industry as part of the proposed restructuring exercise is not supported (Para 8.15);
7. The Ministry should establish a Working Group to address the question of its future representation in the provinces and, in particular, to define the functions and outputs involved and to identify the organizational structures, systems and resources required to support these activities (Para 8.15)
8. The revised organizational structure proposed in this Report should be adopted (Para 8.16);
9. Formal approval for the revised structure agreed and the grading of the posts involved should be sought from the Establishment Secretary's Office and the Civil Service Grading Committee (Para 8.17);
10. A separate review should be undertaken of the Department of Cooperatives and this review should also examine the future relationship of the Department with the Ministry and the appropriate location or linkage of its future activities in view of the decentralization changes planned (Para 8.18);

11. To assist with any future review, the Department of Cooperatives should prepare a database of existing active cooperative societies by type and location (Para 8.19);
12. The Ministry should prepare a strategic plan setting out the future role of the Ministry, the areas where it should focus its efforts to have the greatest impact, the key challenges the Ministry faces in the next 3-5 years and what its strategic priorities should be bearing in mind the resources available (Para 8.21);
13. Work plans should be prepared at directorate level and should cover a quarterly period on a rolling basis (Para 8.22);
14. All professional, administrative and clerical staff should be provided with written job descriptions (Para 8.23)
15. The existing draft Schemes of Service for professional posts at the Ministry should be reviewed and resubmitted to the Establishment Secretary's Office for formal approval (Para 8.25);
16. The Ministry should review its procedures for handling procurement orders under Le25m to ensure in future that it maintains a list of registered suppliers and a procurement committee within the Ministry oversees the opening of sealed bids from suppliers, in line with the procedures laid down in the recently published interim rules and regulations governing public sector procurement in Sierra Leone. (Para 8.28);
17. Meetings of the Senior Management Committee should be re-activated on a monthly basis (Para 8.30);
18. During preparation of the Ministry's 2005 Budget, the Ministry should keep in mind the opportunities for recommending promotion, particularly in cases where staff are holding acting appointments and have done so for a number of years (Para 8.32);
19. The Ministry should introduce manpower and succession planning as part of its personnel function, in order to avoid in future the situation existing at the Department of Cooperatives where 60% of the professional staff are due to retire within the next ten years (Para 8.34);
20. A weekly Movement Return should be introduced for senior officers recording individual staff's meetings, appointments, travel plans for the following week (Para 8.35);

- 21 Senior management should ensure that all key instructions and decisions are recorded on files in accordance with standard civil service records management procedures (Para 8.37);
- 22 The Ministry should be included in any Records Management work programme initiated by the Public Service Reform Unit (Para 8.38);
- 23 The Ministry should consult the Establishment Secretary's Office about the possibility of paying a special allowance to those clerks acting in a secretarial capacity in line with the practice operating in other ministries (Para 8.40);
- 24 The Ministry should review its existing store procedures to bring them into line with prescribed practices set out in Government Store Rules (Para 8.41);
- 25 An asset register of existing equipment and property of the Ministry should be prepared and maintained (Para 8.41);
- 26 An internal audit unit should be established at the Ministry of Trade and Industry at the earliest opportunity (Para 8.42);
- 27 The Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance and the Establishment Secretary's Office, should ensure that the authorized manpower figures approved and published in the 2005 Estimates reflect the actual provision agreed by post, job designation and grade (Para 8.44);
- 28 The existing lack of manpower capacity at the Ministry is acknowledged and, to meet this resource constraint, provision should be made in the 2005 Estimates for the additional posts identified in this report (Para 8.47);
- 29 The Establishment Secretary's Office should be asked to fill the two counterpart positions in the Policy, Planning and Research directorate as a matter of priority (Para 8.47);
- 30 A full job inspection should eventually be undertaken to identify and validate the Ministry's long term staffing needs (Para 8.49)
- 31 The post holder occupying the post of driver at the Department of Cooperatives, where there is no vehicle, should be transferred to the Ministry where there are vehicles but no official driver (Para 8.50);
- 32 The Ministry should arrange for the Establishment Secretary's Office to re-deploy the two technicians employed in the now defunct vehicle division of

the Department of Cooperatives to another Ministry where their skills can be more fully utilized (Para 8.51);

- 33 Formal approval should be sought from the Establishment Secretary's Office to regularize the present arrangements under which non-civil servants are employed in the Ministry as "Help Mates" and as an "Adviser" to the Minister (Para 8.52);
- 34 The work already undertaken on training needs analysis by the Policy; Planning and Research division should be completed as soon as possible, and a training policy and training plan developed (Para 8.54);
- 35 The need for training in office related skills, particularly for clerical staff, should be recognized in any training programme developed (Para 8.55);
- 36 The Ministry should take active measures now to ensure that, if and when the manpower proposals in this report are approved, the additional accommodation required to house the extra staff is available at the beginning of the 2005 financial year (Para 8.56);
- 37 In order to be in a position to meet its longer term accommodation requirements, the Ministry should start the process now of preparing detailed plans of its future needs and should make formal and informal representations to those in authority who take these decisions to ensure they are fully aware of the Ministry's requirements (Para 8.57);
- 38 As funding becomes available, staff in the provinces should be provided with sufficient motorcycles or other means of transport to carry out more efficiently their monitoring and advisory duties (Para 8.58).
- 39 The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should be asked if alternative arrangements can be made to ensure that the Ministry of Trade and Industry's communication and representational requirements are fully met (Para 8.59).

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), with assistance from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), embarked between June 2002 and November 2003 on a programme of functional and management reviews in the key Ministries of Education, Health, Agriculture, Local Government and Defence. These reviews were linked to the GOSL's programme to promote good governance in the public service in order to restore efficiency and increase the capacity for the delivery of services to the population and constituted the first phase of a planned programme of studies to eventually cover all government ministries.

1.2 In a separate initiative, an organizational and structural review of the Ministry of Trade and Industry was undertaken in December 2002 by a consultant commissioned by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). The report was subsequently reviewed by the Steering Committee on Good Governance which, in principle, accepted the report but with a rider to the effect that it did not cover the full range of management issues normally associated with previous reviews carried out under the functional and management review programme. In particular, the Committee noted that the report did not cover activities such as procurement, staff rationalization, records management and inter-departmental interaction within the Ministry. As a result, the Committee recommended to Cabinet that DFID be asked to conduct a more holistic review of the Ministry that would complement the work already undertaken but would be more consistent with the scope of the reviews in other ministries.

1.3 The report undertaken by the CFTC consultant provided a comprehensive description of the functions, structures, work practices and staffing of the Ministry. It is not proposed therefore to cover the same ground in detail in this report other than to provide a brief outline of the arrangements in place in May 2004 at the start of this study, to draw attention to changes that have occurred during the intervening period and to address in particular those issues highlighted for the attention of the DFID consultants by the Steering Committee on Good Governance during their earlier deliberations on the subject. We have also commented in detail on work activities not covered in the CFTC report and have drawn attention to functional, organizational and management issues that we considered relevant in the context of the ministerial review programme.

1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the earlier CFTC report.

2.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 The following terms of reference were agreed for the study:

“ Based on the CFTC funded Review Report, the recommendations approved by Cabinet, and implementation to date of the said recommendations:

a) Review in the Ministry of Trade and Industry:

- The functions of the Ministry in terms of objectives and coverage of activities assessing coherence, priorities, relevance, capacity to handle functions and needs in reform;
- The structures of the Ministry and constituent departments from the criteria of suitability for carrying out existing and reformed functions with optimum efficiency and effectiveness.
- The administrative procedures in terms of, for example, record keeping systems, approval arrangements and work flows, again from the perspective of optimum efficiency and effectiveness;
- The personnel in position from the point of view of suitability for job descriptions and duties, qualifications and experience and performance in post in relation to key institutional functions and objectives.

b) Make recommendations on:

- The redefinition of functions to enhance coherence and ensure efficient and effective performance;
- The revised organizational structures required to carry out best the functions defined;
- The changes required in administrative procedures to enhance decision making and delivery;
- The staff needed in terms of numbers, qualifications, experience and training requirements to introduce new structures, systems and procedures.

c) In addition, the consultants will:

- Examine the patterns of communication between the Ministry, the private sector and the public (defined widely to include pressure groups, economic interests, civil society and individual citizens) to assess whether the interests are being satisfactorily communicated to the Ministry and whether Ministry decisions and policies are being satisfactorily communicated and understood by interested groups and citizens.

Make recommendations on improvement in the areas referred to above that will enhance communication.”

2.2 In essence, the review was focused on the functions, structures and administrative arrangements of the Ministry and the staff directly employed in support of these activities as well as training and skills qualifications. It did not include reviewing the organization, staffing levels or work of the Ministry’s agencies, ie the Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation (SLEDIC) and the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau.

3.0 OUR APPROACH TO THE STUDY

3.1 A meeting was held with the Permanent Secretary prior to the start of the review to discuss the background and parameters of the study. It was agreed that the main source of data collection would be questionnaires and interviews and for this purpose a form had been designed (see Appendix A) which sought information about an individual’s position in the organization, the purpose of the post as well as details about work activities and administrative arrangements. The questionnaires were used as the basis for a series of structured interviews that covered all senior posts at the Ministry including heads of divisions, senior management at the Department of Cooperatives and those postholders responsible for providing central support services as well as other subordinate posts in the organization. As part of the consultative process, a meeting was also convened with clerical and support staff in the Ministry to explain the purpose of the review and to obtain feedback on the subject.

3.2 The information obtained enabled us to build up a picture of the structures and working arrangements at the Ministry. The interviews also covered manpower and management issues, working arrangements, training, material resources, internal and external links at the Ministry as well as any problems or other issues identified. Visits were also made to two of the three Provinces to interview staff of the Ministry deployed there about their work activities. The names of the people interviewed are listed at Appendix B.

3.3 Meetings were also held with officials of the Establishment Secretary's Office, the Ministry of Finance and the DFID Office in Freetown as well as representatives of Civil Society and the names of those concerned are also listed in Appendix B.

3.4 In addition to the interviews and meetings, information was also collected on the Ministry's operational policies and practices, manpower and workloads as well as relevant reports and documents that could assist with the study. Details of the documents reviewed are recorded at Appendix C.

3.5 The fieldwork stage of the review was undertaken between 31 May 2004 and 25 June 2004.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Although this report has been commissioned by DFID under British Aid arrangements, the British Government bears no responsibility, and is not in any way committed to the views and recommendations contained therein.

5.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5.1 We were very grateful for the support provided by the Permanent Secretary and his colleagues at the Ministry during the study. We also appreciated the time so readily given by the Hon Minister, Dr (Mrs) K A Sesay and those staff interviewed in answering our enquiries and in providing assistance in obtaining any additional information we required that was not immediately available.

5.2 We were also grateful for the interest and support shown in the project by Keith Bastin, Senior Governance Adviser, at the DFID Development Office in Freetown and Mr. E B O Coker, Coordinator of Public Service Reform at the Governance Reform Secretariat during the course of the study.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The Ministry of Trade and Industry is responsible for overseeing and facilitating the liberalization of trade in Sierra Leone as well as promoting investment by providing incentives and guarantees in a competitive environment. It also encourages the development of cooperatives throughout the country, provides support to the small and medium-size enterprises sector (SME) and sponsors the establishment and development of Production Centres. The Ministry was established in the 1960s and later its range of responsibilities and functions were expanded through various Decrees and Acts of Parliament. In recent years, the Ministry's range of responsibilities on trade and industry subjects has diminished with the transfer of some of its activities to other ministries or public bodies.

6.2 The overall goal of the Ministry, incorporated in its Mission Statement, is to develop and implement policies and programmes designed to stimulate domestic and international trade and enhance investment and economic growth within Sierra Leone.

6.3 Primary objectives include:

- The facilitation and supervision of private sector activities in the areas of commerce and industry;
- The formulation and implementation of trade policies and regulations;
- The promotion of exports of agriculture and other products and securing capital for investment.
- Encouragement of activities that facilitate the development and promotion of cooperatives and the small and medium-size enterprises (SME) sector;
- Encouraging business development research.
- Enhancing consumer protection through the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau.
- Providing an interface between government and regional/international organizations for enhancement of the business sector.

6.4 Sierra Leone's main exports are diamonds, rutile, cocoa and fish products while imports largely consist of food, fuel, chemicals, machinery and transport equipment. The Ministry was unable to provide any information about the country's export/import earnings or expenditure although information provided by the Ministry of Finance indicated that there was a substantial trade deficit in 2003.

6.5 At the time of this review, the Ministry was structured into four divisions and a department namely, Administration, Policy, Planning and Research, Industry, Trade and the Cooperatives Department. It also supervises two agencies, the Standards Bureau and the Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation (SLEDIC). Each of these organizations receives a subvention from government. A brief description of the main responsibilities of each unit is recorded at Appendix D together with a summary of the work and support services provided by Administration.

6.6 The majority of the Ministry's staff are located in Freetown either in the Ministry's headquarters at Brookfields or at the Department of Cooperatives office in the city. There are 8 staff based in the provinces as statistical clerks and the Department of Cooperatives has a network of provincial and Area Offices, a number of which were destroyed or vandalized during the rebel war. According to the latest payroll they have 20 staff in the provinces primarily in the Bo and Kenema areas. At the time of the review, there were 135 staff in post representing a mix of permanent, temporary and daily paid employees. The manpower provision for the Ministry including the Department of Cooperatives for 2004 is 138 posts. The Ministry's budget for 2004, covering personnel expenditure and other charges, is Le1.323 billion and the projected figures for 2005 and 2006 are Le 1.455 billion and Le1.600 billion respectively.

6.7 Over the years, there has been a steady erosion of the Ministry's responsibilities on trade and industry to other ministries and this changing and diminishing role together with a lack of sufficient resources with relevant skills and expertise, particularly among the professional staff, has exacerbated capacity problems within the organization. As a result, the present Minister approached CFTC in 2002 for assistance and the latter body agreed to fund an organizational review of the Ministry for completion in December 2002.

6.8 The CFTC report made 22 recommendations primarily directed at the restructuring of the Ministry, the reallocation of functions and the staffing requirements of the organization. It also proposed capacity building measures for both the immediate and longer terms and recommended a number of further studies. Of the 22 recommendations, only the name change and the one relating to the setting up of the Policy and Planning Unit have been implemented – and in

the latter case only in embryonic form - in that the overseas experts are now in post but their counterparts have still to be appointed.

6.9 The Ministry's explanation for delay in implementing the remaining recommendations placed great emphasis on the fact that the delay was not due to lack of effort on their part in pushing for reform but to the problems experienced in gaining approval to implement the revised structure and in obtaining the necessary additional posts and other resources needed to take forward the changes agreed.

7.0 OVERVIEW OF PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS

Statutory Framework

7.1 Research into the legal framework regulating trade and industry in Sierra Leone reveals a range of Acts and Decrees some going back nearly fifty years. There is now a need to review and update some of these statutes and to introduce new legislation to provide greater protection for the public against trade and commercial abuses. The main legislative instruments currently covering trade and industry and impacting on the work of the Ministry and its two agencies are:

- Price Tag Order, 1956
- Non-Citizen Trade and Business Act, 1969
- The Retail Trade Act, 1973
- Cooperative Societies Act, 1949 as amended in 1977
- The Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation Decree, 1993
- African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA)
- The Standards Decree, 1996

Functions

7.2 The main functions of the Ministry can be summarized as follows:

- Coordinating and monitoring the work of the various divisions for which the Ministry is responsible and providing policy advice and support to the Minister and Deputy Minister.
- Formulating policies to promote external trade with other countries, negotiating trade agreements and liaising with regional and international trade organizations.
- Monitoring the continuous availability and prices of essential commodities.
- Registration of companies under the Non-Citizens Trade and Business Act 1969.
- Collection, organization and dissemination of information on a wide range of trade subjects including international trade regulations, national and international standards specification for selected products, statistical data on major markets and products and tariff clarification.
- Overseeing the activities of two agencies, namely SLEDIC and the Standards Bureau.
- Registration of cooperatives and promoting their establishment as well as supervising and training members to manage them.

7.3 As part of government policy to re-focus and modify the role and functions of the Ministry, responsibility for State Enterprises was transferred to the Privatization Commission in 2003 and we were informed that it is still the intention to Repeal the Non-Citizen Trade and Business Act, 1969 when the Investment Code is ultimately issued. We understand that the Ministry has taken no follow-up action to date on the recommendation in the CFTC report about pursuing the transfer of responsibility for Intellectual Property and Trade Mark issues to the Ministry from the Judiciary Department where it currently rests. We were also surprised to note that the Ministry of Development and Economic Planning takes the lead role on trade issues involving ECOWAS and the Mano River Union but we understand that this is primarily due to historical reasons.

7.4 In terms of current activities, all units reviewed were reportedly carrying out the range of functions allocated although the scale and scope of the services provided was usually limited by the availability of resources to undertake planned activities. In particular, the File Office/Correspondence Section was providing a

very limited service and the lack of transport was also proving a major problem in managing activities in the Provinces.

7.5 The Review Team identified a number of other issues relating specifically to functional and operational problems impacting on the organization that need to be addressed. These involved lack of clarity of functions and roles, confused reporting lines of command and inadequate internal administrative systems and processes to meet the Ministry's operational requirements. We address these issues in greater detail later in the report.

Structures

7.6 As indicated earlier in the report, the present structure of the Ministry provides for two professional divisions i.e. Trade and Industry, each headed by a director and the Department of Cooperatives managed by a Registrar. The heads of all three units report on professional issues to the Permanent Secretary. Administration is a separate division headed by the Permanent Secretary, who in addition to being Vote Controller for the Ministry, is principal adviser to the Minister on policy matters, coordinates policy issues within the organization as well as being responsible for the provision of administrative and support services. In addition, there is a Policy, Planning and Research Unit that is currently manned by two technical experts, one from CFTC and the other from the Overseas Development Institute. Appendix E sets out the organizational structure and line management relationships in place at the commencement of this study.

7.7 Appendix F records the revised structure recommended by the CFTC consultant in December 2002. His report proposed the restructuring of the Ministry into five Departments, each headed by a director or in the case of Domestic Commerce and Industry a deputy secretary or professional equivalent reporting direct to the Permanent Secretary. The departments were:

Policy and Planning

External Trade

Domestic Commerce and Industry Department

Consumer Protection and Competition Department

Personnel, Finance and Administration.

7.8 His restructuring recommendations were only partially accepted by the Ministry at the time and it put forward counter-proposals of its own. The Ministry's preferred structure is illustrated at Appendix G. Under these proposals there

would be four directorates plus an administration, finance and support services unit. The individual directorates would consist of:

Policy, Planning and Research

Foreign Trade

Domestic Commerce and Industry

Cooperatives

7.9 Under the Ministry's revised proposed arrangements, there would be a Permanent Secretary and a newly created post of Director General, neither subordinate to the other. The Permanent Secretary would be the Administrative Head of the Ministry and principal adviser to the Minister on administrative matters and coordinate all programmes within the Ministry. The Director General would be the professional head of the Ministry and would be principal adviser to the Minister and Deputy Minister on all professional issues. It was also proposed to create a post of Deputy Director General who would be responsible for the Information Unit within the Ministry and for direct supervision of the regional offices and expanded network of provincial offices it was intended to develop.

7.10 As a result of the CFTC report, a Policy, Planning and Research unit was set up by the Ministry in 2004 manned by two external advisers funded with donor support and during 2003 the Ministry prepared a draft Scheme of Service to underpin the proposed new structure which was submitted to the Establishment Secretary's Office for approval. Although we have established that discussions were held between the two parties last year about the scheme we understand that no formal approval was given by the Establishment Secretary's Office to the new structure or to the Scheme of Service and no referral made to the Civil Service Regrading Committee to consider the grading of the new posts involved.

Working Arrangements

7.11 Direct supervision of staff and work activities is carried out by line managers on a daily basis or by regular reporting arrangements. All units visited had prepared work programmes covering their organization's activities as part of the annual budget process although these documents generally lacked sufficient detail in terms of tasks, outputs and timescales for day-to-day working purposes. In most cases, there were no formal work plans available and this was particularly evident in the Industry and Trade divisions where objectives, functions and roles needed to be clarified and developed.

7.12 In terms of financial and budgetary management, the Ministry operates a decentralized system of control with the structure based effectively on three programmes with separate provision made for the Department of Cooperatives. Overall control is exercised by the Permanent Secretary as Vote Controller.

7.13 Most staff interviewed had not been issued with job descriptions although standard job schedules were available in some cases. We were informed that the lack of job descriptions resulted in some confusion over allocation of work and line management responsibilities on occasions.

Staffing

7.14 According to the information provided by the Ministry there were 135 staff in post at the time of the review against a provision of 138 shown for 2004 in the Recurrent and Development Estimates. A breakdown of this figure indicates that there were 61 staff at the Ministry and 74 staff at the Department of Cooperatives against a provision of 72 and 66 posts respectively.

7.15 In addition to these posts, there are five staff employed as “Help Mates” in the Trade and Industry directorates and another position of Special Adviser to the Minister. These employees do not have contracts of employment but are paid by the Ministry from a line budget provision for honorarium in the annual estimates.

7.16 Other than for staff at the Department of Cooperatives, all clerical and ancillary staff are nominally under the control and supervision of the Staff Superintendent at the Ministry’s headquarters. In the case of the Department of Cooperatives, there is a separate post of Staff Superintendent although this position has been vacant for almost two years.

7.17 There is clearly a shortage of skills in key posts in the Ministry, particularly in the professional cadres. In the 1997 financial year, for example, the authorized establishment of the Ministry was 373 posts and a breakdown of these figures by division revealed the following allocation:

7.18 Division	1997	2004
Office of Permanent Secretary	79	44
Trade	90	24
Industry	47	4
Cooperatives	157	66
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	373	138

7.19 Although a direct comparison between these figures would not be an entirely fair reflection of the situation because of the transfer of a number of activities from the Ministry over the years, it does illustrate the sharp reduction in staff numbers that has taken place during the intervening period. It also emphasizes the difficulty the Ministry is facing in terms of lack of adequate manpower when a division such as Industry, responsible for industrial planning and development, has only one professional officer in post.

Training

7.20 Opportunities for training and personal development are currently limited although some staff had an opportunity in the past year to undergo some overseas training and other officers have received in-country training. There was, however, no systematic training policy or programme in place and most staff accepted that this was primarily due to financial constraints. As a result, the heads of the professional and technical directorates at the Ministry referred to the fact that their units did not have the capacity to undertake some key activities as staff did not have the necessary skills.

7.21 The majority of clerical and support staff had not attended any job related course although a few had undertaken some computer training. The lack of opportunity for staff development was reflected in the quality of service provided and this was confirmed in the views expressed by a number of senior staff about the poor quality of central support facilities available at the Ministry.

Accommodation & Material Resources

7.22 Accommodation, as opposed to space standards, at the Ministry is reasonably good as the building has recently been refurbished. There is however a chronic shortage of space that means some staff are working in overcrowded and physically demanding conditions. In particular, the File/Correspondence Section is housed in cramped and totally unsuitable conditions for the work being undertaken. The present situation also means that there would be major problems finding room for any extra staff posted to the Ministry in the existing accommodation.

7.23 Although the Ministry has recently received a generous gift of computers, photocopiers and scanners from the Chinese Government and this has improved the situation considerably, there are still chronic shortages of material resources for staff to carry out their duties. For example, the Department of Cooperatives has no vehicle and this obviously limits the range of activities its staff can undertake outside Freetown. The Ministry is in much the same position and this lack of mobility is having a major impact on performance and the efficient use of staff resources.

8.00 ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 In this section of the report, we examine in detail the functions and structures that underpin the organization and comment on other issues that emerged during the study. As part of this process, we have conducted over fifty interviews with staff of the Ministry as well as consulted with representatives from other Ministries and agencies with close working links to the Ministry. We have also spoken to members of Civil Society organizations who have an interest in the work of the Ministry.

8.2 On the basis of the interviews conducted during this study both within and outside the Ministry, it is clear that the Ministry of Trade and Industry has an important role to play in facilitating development of the private sector in Sierra Leone by promoting enterprise and by creating the enabling environment for business success. It also currently has a significant role to play in the development of economic activity in rural areas through the work of the Department of Cooperatives. It was equally evident, however, during this review that if the Ministry is to be in a position to achieve its objectives and create the desired conditions for business success and industrial development, a substantial injection of resources, especially manpower, will be necessary to tackle existing capacity problems and to enable it to meet its future commitments.

Legislation

8.3 A number of existing statutory instruments impacting on the work of the Ministry date back many years and now need to be updated to meet present day requirements or to be repealed. In particular, the Cooperative Societies Act 1949 (as amended in 1977) and the Price Tag Order 1956 should be reviewed and updated as necessary and **we recommend** accordingly. In the case of the Non-Citizen Trade and Business Act, 1969 we are advised that this legislation will be repealed when the draft Investment Code is eventually enacted.

8.4 As part of the Ministry's forward work programme, there will also be a need in the future to introduce legislation to assist in the development of an effective competition regime and through strengthening consumer protection. In this context, we support the recommendation in the CFTC report that with this activity and other tasks there would be sufficient work to justify the Ministry having its own in-house legal counsel, perhaps on the basis of a secondment from the Attorney General's Department, rather than refer issues to the latter organization and continue to experience the lengthy delays that occur now. If this arrangement is not feasible, **we recommend** the Ministry should consider approaching donors to see if they are prepared to assist in funding a post of legal counsel, at least on an interim basis.

Functions/Structures

8.5 **Functions:** In examining the functions undertaken by the Ministry, we identified a number of activities that were either not clearly defined or were being undertaken on a limited basis. For example, the roles and functions of both the Trade and Industry divisions need to be clarified as part of any re-structuring exercise undertaken at the Ministry. The Sierra Leone Export Development and Investment Corporation Decree of 1993, setting up SLEDIC, transferred a range of functions from the Ministry to the new agency. In implementing the new arrangements, the Ministry did not clearly define the role or the interface of the two organizations and, as a result, this has led to some overlap of functions and conflict of responsibilities. Trade information services and investment promotion, for example, are handled by both SLEDIC and the Ministry while the AGOA (African Growth and Opportunities Act) secretariat is based in the Ministry although responsibility for implementation of policies rests with SLEDIC. **We recommend** that, as part of any restructuring exercise, the Ministry review the roles and functions of staff in the Trade and Industry directorates to ensure definition of responsibilities and clarity of purpose.

8.6 The Department of Cooperatives is also providing a limited service because of resource constraints. The Department's offices were vandalized in some areas of the country during the insurgency and in these places staff are operating out of temporary accommodation. The Department has no vehicles at all and this lack of transport is proving a major problem for staff in carrying out their duties.

8.7 We also noted that the role of the Statistical Clerks working in the Trade division is not clear and that there appears to be some overlap of functions and activities with the work of the Bureau of Statistics. Statistical Clerks are junior staff, formally employed as trade inspectors, who as a result of the introduction of liberalization of trade policy by the government lost their responsibility for monitoring the retail prices of goods. During the intervening period, however, their role has hardly changed and they continue to spend their time monitoring the stock and prices of essential commodities and reporting fortnightly to the Director of Trade. They are located at Kenema (3), Bo (2), Makeni (1) and Kono (2) as well as at Freetown. To a large extent, they are duplicating the work of the Bureau of Statistics which collects data in order to compute the consumer price index.

8.8 Although our discussions with officials in the Trade division raised questions about the current value of the contribution made by statistical clerks to the work of the Ministry, we accept that there might still be a case for retaining these staff in the provinces on trade matters: but their role, functions and outputs need to be clearly defined to determine how best they can support the Ministry's activities in the provinces. The CFTC Report identified some of the functions they

might undertake and also proposed a change in job designation but no action has yet been taken on these issues. **We recommend** that the Ministry should now review the role of the statistical clerks as a matter of priority in order to identify the critical tasks and outputs involved and prepare revised job descriptions as well as deal with the question of change in job title.

8.9 We were also informed that the File Office/Correspondence Section is largely excluded from the normal function of receiving and processing mail at the Ministry. We were told that the secretary to the Permanent Secretary now undertakes these functions. The last entries recorded in the receiving and dispatch registers held by the Correspondence Section were for November and October 2003 respectively. We discuss this subject further in para 8.36 et seq.

8.10 In terms of trade and industry functions currently dealt with by other government ministries, we would envisage that as the Ministry builds up and develops its internal resources and capacity it will eventually be in a position to reclaim lead responsibility on trade issues involving, for example, ECOWAS and the Mano River Union.

8.11 **Structures:** During their analysis of the Ministry's current organization and working arrangements, the proposals put forward in the CFTC Report and the counter-proposals produced by the Ministry each recognized that there was a pressing need to restructure the organization. The existing structure reflected the requirements in the past i.e. during a period of government intervention and price control, and there was now a need to move away from that situation to enable the Ministry to be more focused and equipped to meet its present day remit as well as improving the effectiveness of management. (Appendices F and G show the revised structures proposed respectively). The intention to create a Policy and Planning directorate, which would become the central policy advice unit for the Ministry, was common to both proposals although the Ministry also envisaged the unit would have a research function. The CFTC Report recommended that the existing Industry division should be revamped with one specialist unit responsible for industrial development combining with a second unit, bringing together the work of the Cooperatives and the SME sector, to form a new Domestic Industry and Commerce directorate. It also proposed that a new Consumer Protection and Competition directorate should be established to enable the Ministry to fulfill its statutory responsibilities for regulating the internal market. The Ministry did not agree that it was necessary to establish a new unit to manage consumer protection and competition issues as it considered that these matters would fall within the areas of responsibility of the Trade and the Domestic Commerce and Industry directorates. It also considered that Cooperatives should remain as a separate Department within the Ministry.

8.12 We support the rationale behind the need for restructuring the Ministry and **we recommend** that a directorate structure should be adopted. Having examined the evidence, we are also of the view that there is a need to establish a separate directorate to deal with consumer protection and competition issues as originally proposed in the CFTC Report. As we understand the position, the Ministry takes the view that consumer protection issues are more appropriate to be dealt with by the Standards Bureau. Their role is concerned essentially with enforcement of standards and they have yet to establish a significant national presence outside Freetown. The evidence indicates that consumer protection issues are attracting an increasingly higher profile in terms of public interest and debate and the Ministry needs to be in a position to give consumers ready access to the latest information and advice about goods and services. In terms of competition, the Ministry will also need to review the requirement for introducing an appropriate competition framework to eliminate cartels and allow fair markets to prevail within the country.

8.13 We agree with the Ministry that the Department of Cooperatives should remain a separate unit within the Ministry for the time being although we shall be recommending later in the report that a fundamental review of the Department's organization and staffing arrangements should be undertaken. Part of that review should also consider the Department's future relationship with the Ministry.

8.14 As indicated earlier in the report, the Ministry is also proposing to create the new posts of Director General and Deputy Director General of Trade and Industry. We were informed that HE The President has already given his blessing to the former position and we understand that it is expected that an appointee will take up the post shortly although the matter had not been settled at the time of this review. While we accept there is a good case for creating the post of Director General in the new structure in order to strengthen the professional decision making process in the organization, we do not see any justification for the position of Deputy Director General at this stage. According to the draft scheme of service prepared by the Ministry, the postholder's main responsibilities would be coordinating the work of the organization's regional offices and supervising the Information Unit. It is unlikely that the regional network will be established for some time, and, even then, in our view the workload is unlikely to justify creating a new position of this seniority particularly as we have already indicated the appointment of the Director General should add considerably to the professional management and expertise available within the Ministry at senior management level. We would also expect the head of each directorate to manage their own commands effectively and to provide the necessary professional back up for the Director General when required. We do not therefore support the creation of the post of Deputy Director General in the revised structure and **we recommend** accordingly.

8.15 The Ministry's revised structure also envisaged a substantial increase in staff and of its future activities outside Freetown with the development of its provincial network. We believe that it is premature at this stage to be considering a substantial expansion of existing activities outside Freetown until the structure and organization at the centre is fully operational and working effectively. In the longer term, however, **we recommend** that the Ministry establish a Working Group to address the question of its future representation in the provinces and, in particular to define the functions and outputs involved and to identify the organizational structures, systems and resources required in support of these activities. Any review will need to take into account future decentralization issues and their impact on the operations of the Ministry. It is important in our view that the Ministry of Finance and the Establishment Secretary's Office are represented on the Working Group.

8.16 A revised organization chart incorporating the recommendations in this section of the report is shown at Appendix H. **We recommend** that this structure be adopted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Appendix I lists the main functions and areas of responsibility to be undertaken by each directorate. In terms of line management relationships for the two most senior posts in the organization, the structure takes account of the recommendations contained in the report of the Presidential Commission on the Senior Executive Service.

8.17 **We also recommend** that if and when Cabinet approves an agreed structure that the Ministry formally submits the relevant details to the Establishment Secretary's Office and the Civil Service Regrading Committee so that they can review the posts in the revised organization to ensure they conform to the present Civil Service grading arrangements. In particular, we would draw the attention of the Establishment Secretary's Office to the fact that a change of job designation to "Director" in the case of the Registrar of the Department of Cooperatives would require an amendment to the Cooperative Societies Act 1977. In addition, under the proposed new directorate arrangements, the posts of Deputy Registrar (G9) are scheduled to be upgraded and re-designated Deputy Directors (G10) without any apparent change in work content.

8.18 **Department of Cooperatives:** The CFTC Report recommended a separate review of the Department of Cooperatives to examine not only the functions and role of the organization but to review the 1977 Act, the training needs of the staff and the relationship with the National Cooperative Bank (see page 28 of CFTC Report). Little has changed during the intervening period and we strongly support the original recommendation. Although we recognize that under the Cooperatives Society Act 1977, the Department comes under the Minister responsible for Trade and Industry, **we recommend** that any review should also examine the future relationship of the Department with the Ministry and the appropriate location or linkage of its activities in view of the

decentralization changes planned under the Local Government Act 2004. For example, it may be feasible and even desirable in future to transfer the local administration and supervision of cooperatives to district councils while maintaining a central headquarters unit in Freetown to provide registration, training, audit and control services as well as dealing with representational issues.

8.19 We were told that there are around 2,000 registered societies in the country of which about 800 are currently active. Unfortunately, the Department's records are not up to date and they are unable to provide details of the type or location of these societies. In order to assist any future review, **we recommend** that the Department prepare a database of existing active societies by type and location.

Working Arrangements

8.20 The analysis of questionnaires completed by Ministry staff at the beginning of the study, and the ensuing discussions with individual postholders and senior management about the work of the Ministry, highlighted a number of issues in terms of the organization's procedures and work practices that need to be addressed. These include:

- The lack of a strategic plan for the organization and, at lower operational levels, often the absence of basic work plans.
- Job descriptions and the draft Schemes of Service.
- Current procurement procedures.
- Committee Arrangements.

8.21 **Management and Work Plans:** In common with other ministries, the Ministry of Trade and Industry prepares a work programme covering its activities for the year ahead as part of the annual budget process. Following the setting up of the Policy and Planning Unit, It has also recently introduced regular planning meetings, with limited success, to review progress in meeting the agreed work programme. The Ministry has not yet moved beyond this stage towards developing a strategic plan that sets out the future role of the Ministry, the key challenges the Ministry faces in the next 3-5 years, the areas where it should focus its efforts to have the greatest impact and what its strategic priorities should be bearing in mind the resources available. We understand that this will be one of the priority tasks of the Policy, Planning and Research Directorate and we **recommend** that such a document is prepared. It should provide a sense of

direction and purpose for those working in the Ministry and should highlight the Ministry's key role in influencing its partners in government and beyond in creating the optimum conditions for industrial and business success.

8.22 Work plans generally are not widely available within the Ministry and there is a need to encourage managers at all levels to produce these documents on a regular basis. They provide a useful means of monitoring the activities of individual work units and ensuring work targets are accomplished on time. With this in mind, **we recommend** that these documents should be prepared at directorate level and should cover a quarterly period on a rolling basis.

8.23 **Job Descriptions:** This is an area where we were informed that staff had job descriptions or job schedules but often on further examination these were drafted in very broad terms or were out of date or had not been issued. It is important to emphasize that job descriptions should underpin the grading structure in place and should ensure that all posts support the work plans agreed and in this way contribute to the aims and objectives of the organization as well as providing staff with information about individual responsibilities and accountabilities. **We recommend** a review be undertaken by senior management to ensure that all professional, administrative and clerical staff at the Ministry are provided with a written job description. As the CFTC report indicated, the responsibility for ensuring that staff are provided with job descriptions should rest with the head of each directorate.

8.24 **Scheme of Service:** We referred earlier in the report to a draft Scheme of Service for professional staff at the Ministry that had been submitted to the Establishment Secretary's Office but had not been formally approved. A Scheme of Service is a document that normally outlines the levels of qualifications and experience necessary for entry into and promotion within a particular class or cadre. It also covers duties and standards applicable at each grade within the cadre, guidance on the training necessary for different grade levels, promotion criteria and provisions for transfers into and out of the cadre.

8.25 The advantages of having a clearly worded Scheme of Service for each group of officers is that there can be no doubt as to what an individual must achieve to be appointed or promoted. As soon as the revised structure for the Ministry is approved, **we recommend** that the draft Scheme of Service is re-submitted to the Establishment Secretary's Office for consideration and approval. The document will need to incorporate any changes agreed in the new structure.

8.26 **Procurement:** We identified a number of weaknesses in the present procurement arrangements operated by the Ministry and, in the interests of probity and transparency, propose the following change in procedures.

8.27 Procurement activities are the responsibility of the Sub-Accountant in the Accounts Section in conjunction with the manager of the relevant programme at the Ministry. Under existing arrangements orders over Le25m are currently referred to the Interim Central Procurement Unit (ICPU) but those under Le25m are processed on the basis of three quotations supplied to the Ministry. The latter process is not transparent and is open to abuse. The Accounts unit does not maintain a list of registered suppliers nor is the process subject to sealed bids. The Sub-Accountant and the Manager of the programme concerned currently take decisions.

8.28 **We recommend** that in future the Ministry maintain a list of registered suppliers with whom it does business and that a procurement committee within the Ministry oversees the opening of sealed bids from suppliers. This will bring local practice into line with the procedures laid down in the recently published report on interim rules and regulations governing public sector procurement in Sierra Leone.

8.29 **Committee Arrangements:** We were informed that there was a Senior Management Committee that met regularly under the Chairmanship of the Minister. Membership of this Committee consisted of senior officials of the Ministry including heads of Divisions, the Managing Director SLEDIC and the Director of the Standards Bureau. In addition to this Committee, the Policy, Planning and Research Division had recently instituted a programme of fortnightly meetings with heads of units to monitor and review progress in meeting agreed work programmes. The Permanent Secretary also pointed out that senior management met together frequently to discuss relevant issues and meetings with a wider participation were convened as necessary.

8.30 Although we were informed that the Senior Management Committee met fortnightly, we were surprised to note from examination of the documents on the relevant ministry file that the Committee had apparently only met twice since November 2003. We consider that there is a place for a formal Committee of this nature in an organization such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry and **we recommend** that meetings of this Committee should be re-activated, perhaps on a monthly basis. Many of the senior managers that attended these meetings in the past are based some distance away from the Ministry's headquarters and their presence at these meetings not only kept them informed of the organization's activities but also enabled them to contribute to the Ministry's decision making process. In our view, this should be the most senior committee within the organization and should be responsible for decisions on all policy matters or major issues affecting the operational activities or corporate image of the Ministry.

Working Arrangements – Personnel Policies and Practices

8.31 Central support services available at the Ministry cover the provision of financial, personnel and ancillary services as well as the File Office and related activities such as management of junior staff. There is no dedicated human resource unit as such – the size of the Ministry’s headquarters would probably not justify it - and personnel duties are shared between the Senior Assistant Secretary and one of the Assistant Secretaries while the acting Staff Superintendent is responsible for management of the clerical and ancillary staff.

8.32 The problem with the present arrangements is that both the Senior Assistant Secretary and the Assistant Secretary are often fully extended on other duties and cannot give the detailed attention to personnel matters that the situation requires. As a result, it was apparent during the time we were at the Ministry that staff discipline in terms of time keeping and attendance at work, particularly for junior staff, was irregular to say the least. Our recommendation later in the report (para 8.47 refers) to appoint an additional Senior Assistant Secretary post should help the situation by allowing for improved management control as well as providing greater scope for developing the Ministry’s personnel policies and practices.

8.33 One of the issues raised repeatedly with the Review Team was the lack of promotion opportunities available to staff at the Ministry and the number of cases in which staff holding acting appointments, often for many years, have not been confirmed in the appointment. We realize that this situation is not applicable only to the Ministry of Trade and Industry but it is having an adverse affect on morale and should be addressed at the earliest opportunity. **We recommend** that the Ministry, in consultation with the Establishment Secretary’s Office, keep this issue particularly in mind when preparing the 2005 budget estimates.

8.34 There is no manpower or succession planning being undertaken by the Ministry in terms of its own employees or future requirements. This was particularly evident at the Department of Cooperatives. As Appendix J illustrates, nearly 60% of the professional staff of the Department are due to retire in the next nine years and of these 70% in the next five years. **We recommend** that the Ministry should take action now to address this issue so that it is in a position to meet its future work commitments.

Working Arrangements – Administrative Procedures

8.35 **Movement Return:** We were told on several occasions of the problems caused by staff failing to keep appointments or attending meetings because they were out of the office or had travelled on official business. Often, they overlooked the need to notify other parties involved of their plans and this affected the

Ministry's business and resulted in much wasted and ineffective time for all concerned. To avoid this situation in future, **we recommend** that the Ministry introduce a weekly Movement Return for senior officers. This would be completed at the end of each week and would record the officer's meetings, appointments, travel plans etc for the following week. A nominated officer would be responsible for collating the individual returns and circulating a composite record to all senior staff.

8.36 **File Management:** Although there is a central File Office at the Ministry, it provides a very limited service. Incoming mail is processed elsewhere in the Ministry and the staff in the File Office are effectively only required to maintain the policy files as well as the personal files for both junior and senior staff. They dispatch mail when asked to do so but the last entry in the official register for this activity was in October 2003.

8.37 A more worrying aspect of the present file management arrangements at the Ministry, is that we found some key decisions are not recorded in writing on files and the issuing of instructions and decisions are often transmitted verbally. As a result there are frequent gaps in file histories, it is difficult to corroborate the action taken in specific cases and in some instances key documents cannot be easily traced. If this situation continues the Ministry's institutional information base will be eroded and this will not only affect the Ministry's business but may have legal implications. **We recommend** that senior management take action to ensure that all important instructions and decisions are recorded in writing and relevant documents are placed on files in line with standard civil service records management procedures.

8.38 As far as the work of the File Office is concerned, we understand that Records Management will feature as a component in the next phase of the Public Service Reform Unit's work programme and **we recommend** that the Ministry of Trade and Industry should be included in any schedule of work agreed.

8.39 **Secretaries/Clerks:** Clerks are employed in a variety of jobs at the Ministry, namely in the Accounts Unit, the File Office, as support staff in Administration and, because of a dire shortage of qualified secretaries in government service, as secretaries. Most clerks have received some computer training but have received little other formal training and there is a pressing need to upgrade the standard of their clerical, technical and office skills.

8.40 We consider that the Ministry could do more for these staff in terms of career development and improving morale. For example, in the case of those clerks acting in a secretarial capacity on approved posts, **we recommend** that the Ministry should consult the Establishment Secretary's Office to obtain authority to

pay a special allowance to these staff in line with the practice operating in other ministries.

Working Arrangements – Other Issues

8.41 **Stores** - The Ministry is small and has no need for a large storeroom or storekeeper. The main items purchased are stationery, computer consumables, cleaning items and other provisions and the Account Section is responsible for maintaining the store. Although there is a ledger for entry of goods received and for goods supplied it does not conform to the procedures laid down in Store Rules. There are no issue vouchers and no inventory or asset register maintained of physical items owned by the Ministry. In the circumstances, **we recommend** that the Ministry should review its existing stores procedures to bring them into line with prescribed practices set out in Government Stores Rules. **We also recommend** that a register is prepared of existing equipment and other tangible assets of the Ministry.

8.42 **Audit** - The Ministry does not have an internal audit unit located in the organization and we were told that the last external audit undertaken at the Ministry by the Office of the Auditor General was in 2002. We understand from discussions held with the Director of Internal Audit at the Ministry of Finance that his Ministry is in the process of preparing a draft Bill – The Government Financial Management Act – which is expected to become law later this year. Under this Act, provision would be made to establish an internal audit unit in every ministry. The intention would be to give priority in the first place to the larger ministries to ensure financial systems and controls were working effectively in these organizations. In the view of these developments, **we recommend** that the Ministry of Finance should set up an internal audit unit at the Ministry of Trade and Industry at the earliest opportunity.

8.43 **Information Technology** - The present situation is that the Ministry has about fifty stand-alone computers at the Ministry's headquarters and some machines at the Department of Cooperatives and the Ministry's offices in the provinces. There has not been an integrated approach to the configuration and distribution of the current equipment. We understand that the Policy, Planning and Research division is intending to commission a technical review of the computer needs of the Ministry with the aim of providing a local area network serving all directorates of the Ministry and we would support this move. The presence of such a network should speed up access to and dissemination of information as well as improving control of data held. Internet facilities are currently limited to the two computers in the WTO Centre but we were informed that the division had already completed a needs assessment of future requirements and were also hoping to establish a Ministry website if a suitable donor could be found to provide the necessary finance.

Staffing

8.44 It was difficult to reconcile the Ministry's staffing provision of 138 posts in the 2004 Estimates with the actual staff in post in terms of job designation and grade. For example, there is provision for three posts of Assistant Registrar at the Department of Cooperatives but there are eight staff in post at that grade and there are many other examples of similar anomalies. **We recommend** that the Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance and Establishment Secretary's Office should ensure that the authorized manpower figures approved and published in future budget estimates reflect the actual allocation agreed by post, job designation and grade. This will assist in future in identifying posts with allocated positions.

8.45 Although staff of the Ministry continually referred to existing vacancies in the establishment, it was difficult to corroborate the figures presented because of the current method used by government to determine manpower provision. From an examination of the payroll and staff lists provided by the Ministry, we identified that the Ministry had 135 staff in post at the time of the study against a funding provision in the 2004 budget estimates of 138 posts. There are also five unofficial positions of "Help Mates" and one of Special Adviser to the Minister.

8.46 In terms of staff numbers, we accept that the Ministry is substantially under-resourced in key posts particularly in the professional cadres. If the Ministry is to be in a position to carry out its future work programmes there will be a need for government to provide additional manpower resources both in the short and longer-terms. Although it has not been possible to undertake a full job inspection of the Ministry in the time allocated for this study, we have set out in Appendix K the additional posts required in our view to set up the revised organizational structure referred to in para 8.16.

8.47 In total, we have assessed that there is a minimum need in the short-term ie twelve months, for a further 15 middle grade or senior management posts and **we recommend** that provision is made in the 2005 Budget Estimates for the new positions in question. In addition to the new post of Director General, there will be a requirement for four posts in the Policy, Planning and Research directorate, including two counterparts to the two experts already in post, and for two posts initially in the new Consumer Protection and Competition directorate (the bulk of staff for the latter directorate would eventually move from the present Trade division). The Domestic Commerce and Industry directorate would justify an additional five posts and Foreign Trade two posts. There is also a need to strengthen the Ministry's administrative resources by an additional Senior Assistant Secretary post to support the new structure. We would envisage that part of this extra resource would be used to strengthen the personnel function in the Ministry.

8.48 We have not addressed at this stage the staffing requirements of the Department of Cooperatives as we would expect that this issue would be covered in the review recommended earlier in the report. Nor have we made provision for representation overseas as we were informed that Cabinet had already approved the opening of trade attaché offices in London, Washington and Brussels. In terms of priority, we recommend that the Establishment Secretary's Office is approached as a matter of urgency and asked to fill the two counterpart positions in the Policy, Planning and Research directorate as soon as possible.

8.49 There is a surplus number of clerical staff in the Ministry at the present time and in some cases, because of the existing accommodation constraints, some staff experience difficulty finding a desk and chair to work at. We do not propose, however, making any recommendation at this stage to reduce the number of clerical staff as we consider that when the proposed revised structure has been introduced there will be a requirement for increased clerical assistance to support the new arrangements. In the longer term, however, **we recommend** that when the initial restructuring exercise has been implemented and the new organizational arrangements have had sufficient time to take effect, a job inspection should be undertaken to identify and validate the Ministry's long term staffing requirements.

8.50 We identified several staffing anomalies during the study and we deal with these in the following paragraphs. The Department of Cooperatives employs a driver but has had no official vehicle for over six years while the Ministers have vehicles but no official driver. Indeed, we were informed that the Ministry had written to the Establishment Secretary's Office asking for a driver to be posted there. In the circumstances, **we recommend** that the postholder at Cooperatives be transferred to the Ministry.

8.51 As part of its organization, the Department of Cooperatives has a vehicle division in Freetown and employs two technicians in this capacity. It has not however had any vehicles for some years and for all intents and purposes the unit does not now exist as an operational entity. **We recommend** that the Ministry approach the Establishment Secretary's Office to arrange for the two staff to be redeployed to another Ministry where their skills can be fully utilized.

8.52 The Ministry is also employing a local consultant as "Special Adviser" to the Minister and five posts of "Help Mates" in the Trade and Industry divisions. They are responsible for undertaking a range of professional and administrative duties and are now virtually embedded in the organization. They are not civil servants and have not been appointed in the normal manner through the Establishment Secretary's Office and the Public Service Commission. They apparently do not have a contract of employment and are paid from a line provision in the budget for honorarium. While we recognize the urgent need of the

Ministry to secure the services of professional staff, **we recommend** that formal approval should now be sought from the Establishment Secretary's Office to regularize the present arrangements.

Training and Staff Development

8.53 Training opportunities for most staff at Ministry have been very limited in recent years and in some cases staff have received no formal training since taking up their present posts. We were told repeatedly during this study that there was an acute shortage of professional and administrative skills available in key positions in the organization and we would agree with this assessment.

8.54 There is no prescribed training policy or programme in place for the staff of the Ministry but most staff interviewed expressed a desire for further development and training opportunities. In this context, we understand that the Policy, Planning and Research Unit is currently in the process of carrying out a training needs analysis for staff at the Ministry and **we recommend** that this work should be completed as soon as possible. In our view, it should be used not only as the basis for preparing a training plan for staff but also for developing a training policy for the Ministry. Some of the training needs identified can possibly be met by the expatriate advisers working at the Ministry providing formal training locally while in other cases it may be necessary to seek donor help to implement the training plan. In the latter case, the aim should be to ensure that potential donors have a clear indication of the priority training required and likely costs involved in implementing all or part of any training programme developed.

8.55 Training for clerical staff should not be overlooked. There is a particular requirement for training in records management and related office skills and **we recommend** that these needs be recognized in any training plan developed.

Accommodation & Material Resources

8.56 We have already referred earlier in the report to the shortage of material resources at the Ministry, particularly the lack of transport, and the difficulties this is causing staff. Accommodation in terms of lack of space is also a major problem and is an issue that needs to be addressed with some urgency. At present, space standards are stretched to the limit and it would be difficult if not impossible to accommodate all the additional posts recommended in this report in the Ministry's allocated space in the Youyi building. With this in mind, **we recommend** that the Ministry should take active measures now to ensure that, if and when the manpower proposals in this report are approved, the additional accommodation required in the short-term i.e. at the beginning of next year, is available to house the extra staff involved.

8.57 In the longer-term, we consider that the Ministry should be examining the case for consolidating its various disparate units scattered around Freetown in one building in the city. One possibility might be to return to its former offices in George Street when the Ministry of Finance eventually moves out. Although a solution on these lines may be several years away, **we recommend** that the Ministry starts the process now of preparing detailed plans of its future accommodation requirements and makes formal and informal representations to those in authority who take these decisions to ensure that they are fully aware of the Ministry's requirements.

8.58 **Transport:** We appreciate that the financial situation might not allow much progress at present but in terms of priorities **we recommend** that staff in the provinces are provided with sufficient motor cycles or other means of transport to carry out more efficiently their monitoring and advisory duties.

Communication

8.59 The Ministry shares a Press Officer, assigned by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and the Environment. This arrangement is not working well and, as a result, the Deputy Secretary and the Senior Assistant Secretary are left to organize most of the press releases issued by the Ministry as well as the management of radio broadcasts and television interviews. **We recommend** that the Ministry approach the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to see if alternative arrangements can be made to ensure that the Ministry's communication and representation requirements are fully met.

8.60 Other ways in which the Ministry gets across its message are through the normal parliamentary processes and the need each year for the Minister to make a presentation at the State of the Nation Symposium. In terms of international representation, members of the Ministry's staff regularly attend conferences overseas and we were informed that SLEDIC is responsible for preparing brochures and pamphlets about trade and investment opportunities in Sierra Leone that are available from the Agency and are disseminated at Trade Fairs and through the country's overseas missions.

8.61 During our discussions with representatives of Civil Society organizations, the point was made that they would expect the Ministry to adopt a more pro-active role in explaining to the public the reasons for the continuing price increases of essential commodities and/or shortages of goods. The Director of the Campaign for Good Governance confirmed that her organization had had very little direct contact with the Ministry in the past but she indicated that her members were taking an increasing interest in activities covered by the Ministry and referred in particular to consumer protection issues.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 We presented our emerging findings to senior management at the end of the fieldwork stage of the study and explained the proposed sequence of events when the final report was produced. Subject to the decisions taken on the merits and implementation of individual recommendations we propose the following timescale be adopted.

Recommendations that can be Implemented in the short-term	Approximate Timescale	Responsibility
Review roles & functions of staff in Trade and Industry divisions (Rec 3)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Role & job designation of Statistical Clerks To be reviewed (Rec 4)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Proposal to create post of Deputy Director General of Trade & Industry not supported (Rec 6)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Dept of Cooperatives should prepare database of existing active societies by type and location (Rec 11)	Immediate	Dept of Cooperatives
Work Plans to be prepared (Rec. 12)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Written job descriptions to be prepared for all professional, administrative and clerical staff (Rec. 14)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Ministry to review internal procurement procedures for orders under Le12m (Rec. 16)	Immediate	MoT&I
Meetings of Senior Management Committee should be re-activated (Rec. 17)	Immediate	MoT&I
Weekly Movement Return should be introduced (Rec. 20)	Immediate	MoT&I
Key decisions & instructions should be recorded on files (Rec. 21)	Immediate	MoT&I
The Establishment Secretary's Office to be consulted about payment of allowances to clerks working in secretarial capacity (Rec. 23)	Immediate	MoT&I and Estab. Sect Office
Review of existing internal stores procedures (Rec. 24)	Immediate	MoT&I
Asset register should be prepared and maintained of existing equipment (Rec. 25)	Immediate	MoT&I
Two counterpart posts in Policy, Planning & Research Unit to be filled as a priority (Rec. 29)	Immediate	MoT&I and Estab. Sect Office

Post of driver at Cooperatives to be transferred to Ministry (Rec. 31)	0-3 months	MoT&I
Two technicians employed in defunct vehicle division of Cooperatives to be redeployed (Rec. 32)	0-3 months	MoT&I and Estab. Sect Office
Status of Help Mates and the Adviser to Minister to be reviewed (Rec. 33)	Immediate	Mot&I and Estab Sect Office
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting to be asked if alternative arrangements can be made to meet Ministry of Trade's communication and representational requirements (Rec. 39)	Immediate	MoT&I and Ministry of Information& Broadcasting

Recommendations that are of high priority but require planning and organization	Approximate Timescale	Responsibility
Existing legislation to be updated (Rec. 1)	6- 12 months	MoT&I & Office of Solicitor General
The case for restructuring the Ministry is accepted and a directorate structure should now be introduced (Rec. 5)	6 months	MoT&I and Steering Committee
Ministry to set up Working Group to determine future provincial network (Rec. 7)	12 months	MoT&I
Organizational structure proposed in Report should be adopted (Rec. 8)	6 months	MoT&I and Estab Sect Office
Approval to be sought of grading of posts involved in new structure (Rec. 9)	6 months	MoT&I and Estab Sect Office
Separate review to be undertaken of Department of Cooperatives (Rec. 10)	Within 12 months	MoT&I, Public Service Reform Unit with donor assistance
Preparation of strategic plan (Rec. 12)	6 months	MoT&I
Draft Scheme of Service to be reviewed and re-submitted to Establishment Secretary's Office (Rec. 15)	6 months	MoT&I and Estab Sect Office
Promotion opportunities should be kept in mind when preparing Ministry's 2005 budget proposals (Rec. 18)	Preparation of 2005 budget	MoT&I and Estab Sect Office
Ministry to prepare manpower plan (Rec. 19)	6 months	MoT&I

Ministry to be included in any Records Management programme (Rec. 22)	When timing of work programme decided	Public Service Reform Unit
Internal audit to be established at Ministry (Rec. 26)	When legislation is enacted and resources available.	Ministry of Finance
Manpower figures approved and published in 2005 budget estimates should reflect provision agreed (Rec 27)	Preparation of 2005 budget	MoT&I, Estab Sect Office & Ministry of Finance
Provision should be made for additional posts identified in this Report (Rec 28)	2005 budget	MoT&I, Estab Sect Office & Ministry of Finance
Need for office related skills training for clerical staff should be recognized in any training programme developed (Rec 35)	6 months	MoT&I
Active measures should be taken to ensure the additional office accommodation required by the Ministry at beginning of 2005 is available (Rec 36)	3-6 months	MoT&I
Detailed plans should be prepared of the Ministry's longer term accommodation needs (Rec 37)	6-36 months	MoT&I & other relevant government agencies

Recommendations Relating to Material Resources & External Inputs	Approximate Timescale	Responsibility
As interim measure, Ministry should consider approaching donors to fund post of legal counsel (Rec 2)	6-12 months	MoT&I plus donor assistance
Job inspection to be undertaken to identify Ministry's long term staffing needs (Rec 30)	Approx two years if capacity available in-country	Public Service Reform Unit & Estab Sect's Office
Training needs analysis to be completed (Rec 34)	3-6 months	MoT&I. Donor help likely to be needed to implement part of the plan.
Provision of motor cycles for those staff in the provinces without transport (Rec 38)	6-12 months	MoT&I plus donor help.