

SERVICE-ETHICS-PERFORMANCE

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail- Patrie

MINISTERE DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE
ET DE LA REFORME ADMINISTRATIVE



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE
AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

SERVICE-ETHIQUE-PERFORMANCE

26th EDITION OF THE AFRICA PUBLIC SERVICE DAY

LETTER BY THE MINISTER OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM TO STATE WORKERS AND PUBLIC SERVICE USERS

Subject: Cultivating Ethics and Developing Leadership

Yaoundé, 23 June 2021

Dear Users and Partners of the Cameroon Public Service,

It is a singular pleasure for me to once again address you on the occasion of the commemoration of the twenty sixth edition of the Africa Public Service Day (APSD). Permit me to recall that the Africa Public Service Day was instituted by the first Pan-African Conference of Ministers in charge of the Public Service that held on 20 and 21 June 1994 in Tangier (Morocco) and adopted by the United Nations Organization through Resolution No. 57/277 of 20 December 2002. This year's APSD is celebrated under the theme: *"Building the Africa we want by embracing a culture of ethics that underpins purpose-driven leadership in the context of a crisis"*.

Dear Users and Partners,

This Africa Public Service Day offers the opportunity to recognize and publicize the importance of the Public Service in the life of States. It also aims to encourage public employees to be more devoted to carrying out their mission, while showing proof of initiative and innovation.

This year's celebration comes at a time when our country, like other nations around the world, is affected by the COVID-19 health crisis. The pandemic is compelling all levels of Government to act under intense economic, budgetary and social pressure. The consequences of this global crisis have negatively impacted our socio-economic environment and our way of effectively serving Public Service users. However, thanks to proactive and daring measures which were taken under the visionary impetus of the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul Biya**, and the collective efforts of Cameroon's active forces, including state workers at the front line, our country has been able to face the pandemic and mitigate its effects. Under these dramatic circumstances, Cameroon's Public Service is obliged to reinvent itself in order to preserve the health of the national community. Several innovations have thus been introduced into our public system in order to facilitate access to basic services provided to users.

It is with this in mind that we have further optimized our remote services (website, online registration, remote document delivery and video conferencing).

Since the disease has not been eradicated, I urge you once again to respect the measures taken by the Government to prevent its transmission, especially those relating to vaccination, which is voluntary, but strongly recommended to enable us to achieve the objective of herd immunity of our population and hence the total eradication of this pandemic in Cameroon.

In addition, another challenge is that of building the Africa we want with an ethical Public Service through objective-based leadership in times of crisis.

This year's theme invites us to reflect on the construction of our country on two essential points, namely the culture of ethics within the public service and the development of purpose-driven leadership aimed at achieving the objectives set in the context of the crisis.

Dear Users and Partners,

Permit me to say that when it comes to ethics, the key issue is moral values that lead to irreproachable behaviour by civil servants in the exercise of their duties, including integrity, impartiality, probity and disinterestedness. It calls for general labour-related values contained in the General Rules and Regulations of the Public Service. The English term "*civil servant*" better portrays the notion that we are at the service of the Nation and therefore of the People.

The Head of State has made the cultivation of ethics a key element of his governance since his accession to the supreme authority when he spoke about "rigour and moralization". With regard to issues of embezzlement of public funds, he said in his opening address during the 3rd Extraordinary Congress of the CPDM in Yaoundé on 21 July 2006: "*We still have, I am obliged to say, a serious public moral problem. Despite our efforts to combat them, fraud, embezzlement of public funds and corruption still continue to undermine the foundations of our society. I have often had to express myself on the subject and state my determination to eradicate these social behaviours. Severe sanctions have been taken in recent months. We are not going to stop on the way. Those who have enriched themselves at the expense of public funds will have to pay the price.*"

Likewise, in his Address to the Nation on 31 December 2009, the Head of State said: "*... democracy is also the preservation of public wealth. That is why we have undertaken to fight corruption mercilessly. Do not expect us to stop on the way. We will go all the way, no matter what some people say*".

In addition, the modernization of our administration requires that we show concern for the satisfaction of citizens. In that regard, it is appropriate to remind state employees that public policies are not designed to serve their authors but rather to strengthen the efficiency and transparency of public institutions and the inclusion of all social categories **so that no one is left behind**. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG) addresses this point and encourages States to strengthen their public institutions in order to make the services they provide to users fair and equitable. As such, leadership therefore means the ability to overcome crises and achieve set goals.

It is for this reason that MINFOPRA has set up a Toll-free Number (1522) to receive complaints and reports directly from users on the misconduct of certain public employees.

The public administration must resolutely engage in the modernization of its apparatus through innovations and digital transformation in order to adapt to the context of globalization and be able to provide satisfactory services.

In that respect, online public services have been developed by the Government. Henceforth, users can consult the position of their career files online and request various services through the digital platforms set up by various government services, notably, tax declarations, national identity cards, passports, registration for government competitive examinations, orals of certain competitive examinations, the issuance of some career instruments, the police, fire brigade, etc.

The leadership that we must therefore apply to transform the lives of the population will take into account the following points:

- Governance which brings to mind the concepts of accountability, transparency and freedom of expression.
- Efficient management of human resources. This is one of the principles of effective leadership. Common skills include the ability to manage team dynamics, discipline and conflict management: delegate effectively, motivate staff, communicate effectively, plan, solve problems, make decisions and train the right people to achieve our administration's development goals.: In view to streamlining the State personnel database and fighting against deviant behaviour, the Government has since 2018 initiated a sweeping operation to identify state workers. As of 2021, there are 7,622 irregular civil servants whose absence remains unjustified despite several reminders. We have therefore proceeded with gradual dismissals and lay-offs. An initial list of 493 state workers has been removed from the State payroll. This is sufficient proof of the State's determination to end tolerance for cases of unethical behaviour. As I underscored at a news briefing on 26 May 2021 *"the time for administrative tolerance is over."* Finally, it should be recognized that civil servants devote themselves on a daily basis to serving the general interest, sometimes up to making the ultimate sacrifice. Such is the full meaning of public service in a world increasingly marked by a difficult economic, social and security context, the rise of hate speech and identitarian closure. The role of the civil servant is therefore entirely justified and deserves to be encouraged. In this regard, the state encourages public employees who distinguish themselves positively by granting them various distinctions.

- Lastly, monitoring and evaluation. This provision is an integral part of every development initiative because it systematically checks the level of effectiveness. Results-based monitoring and evaluation are central descriptors in defining leadership as well as in choosing pro-development leaders. A deliberate effort should be made to include leadership assessment as an important component in the evaluation of the SDGs.

Dear civil servants, let us continue to strive to accomplish this noble public service mission. / -

Joseph LE

Minister of the Public Service and Administrative Reform