Restructuring Plan of the MES proposed by the Office of Public Sector Governance

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. **Background**

   The Office of Public Sector Governance was asked to make proposals for the restructuring of the MES to improve its financial and service level performance. After consultation meetings with the Board, the Senior Management of the MES and the staff Unions, its report was published in November 2014.

2. **Main Observations and Findings**

   a. **Organisational Setup**
   It is felt that currently MES is organized in an unreasonable number of Sections and Units (2 Offices, 8 Units, 11 Sections). It is proposed that **4** main divisions be created: Corporate Services, Exams Operation Division, Research and Syllabus Development Division and an Information and Communication Technology Division.

   b. **Human Resources Management**
   The report highlights that it is vital for existing HR practices to be reviewed. It calls for the creation of a full-fledged HR Department, headed by an HR Manager.

   This HR unit should review existing schemes of service, which date from 1984 in certain cases. It also stresses the fact that an analysis of training needs has to be carried out for the MES to be able to offer a career path for continued growth and development to its staff. The need for succession planning, along with the possibility of identifying potential candidates for key posts and prepare them for these posts, was also mentioned. All these measures should allow the MES to retain good staff and develop a stable workforce.

   c. **Finance Section**
   The main issue for the Finance Section is that diverse computerized systems (ORACLE, PASTEL and LOTUS) are used for the flow of information. This seriously hinders the smooth flow of data. It is recommended that a computerization project be carried out to harmonise the flow of information.

It is also proposed that Management Accounts be disaggregated by exams and by department. This would allow profitable and non-profitable exams to be identified more easily.

d. Administration of Exams

A SWOT analysis revealed that there is an ageing staff at the middle level in the sections dealing with the administration of exams. An HR Department would find strategies to deal with this issue.

It is also recommended that Quality Assurance systems and accreditation from external bodies (e.g ISO) be used. It is proposed that a Quality Management System replace the existing Manual of Procedures.

e. Internal Audit and Risk Management

The OPSG Report identifies the fact that the Internal Audit and Risk Management Section does not fulfil its mission fully, in particular with respect to ensuring that resources "are acquired economically and used efficiently" and risk management.

It suggests that an audit of the section be carried out to review its structure and staffing requirements. It proposes the creation of a risk register and the formulation of strategies and policies for risk management.

f. Information Technology

The report deplores the fact that there is an absence of a clear succession strategy in the IT Section.

It recommends the setting up of a sub-committee to study the recommendations of the Project Manager for IT. External Professional advice could also be sought.

g. Legal Matters

The report recommends that the MES Act (1984) be reviewed to reflect the new responsibilities and functions of the MES. It also suggests that Section 7 of the MES Act (1984) be reviewed to allow membership on the Board of a member with expertise in Accounting and Finance.

h. **Strategic Planning**

It is recommended that 3 year Strategic plans be developed, along with appropriate mechanisms for its implementation and monitoring.

i. **Miscellaneous Issues:**

The OPSG report also recommends the following

- The redesigning of the MES website
- Using ICT to improve delivery (e-examination and e-archiving)
- MES to fully participate in the Parastatal Information Management System (PIMS)
- The name of the MES be changed to that of the *Mauritius Examinations and Assessment Board*.

3. Conclusion

The OPSG report ends by commending the achievements of the MES to date. It adds that its proposals are meant to "improve and sustain the quality of its services to cope with the rapid and complex changes" happening in the world of assessment.