

**CONTACT MEETING BETWEEN MR. FONKWE JOSEPH FONGANG,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, AND THE
JUDICIAL AND PENITENTIARY STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

Thursday, 20 July 2017

SPEECH BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL

- **The Inspector General of Judicial Services,**
- **The Inspector General of the Penitentiary Administration,**
- **The Technical Advisers,**
- **The Directors and Division Heads,**
- **The Inspectors,**
- **The Sub-Directors,**
- **The Financial Controller,**
- **Dear colleagues, dear collaborators,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

By Decree No. 2017/278 of 7 June 2017 of the President of the Republic, I was appointed Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice. I am honoured. I wish to take this opportunity to express very respectfully my profound gratitude to the Head of State for this high level of confidence placed in my humble person. In the same spirit of humility and courtesy, I also wish to express my profound gratitude to the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seals for the invaluable support he has always granted me. I am fully aware of the obligation I have not to betray this confidence. I count on the contribution of each of you to succeed in this mission.

Before I proceed, permit me to pay a well-deserved tribute to my illustrious predecessor and senior, Mr. GWANMESIA George, for both his extensive experience which I commend and for the magnitude of his work throughout his long and rich career. I have fond memories of our often edifying and constructive discussions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I resume duty as Secretary General, I thought it wise to invite you to this discussion forum for three main reasons:

1-to better know officials of judicial and penitentiary Work Units of the Ministry of Justice. To this end, a slot has been allocated for self-introduction;

2-to remind ourselves of the expectations of the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seals;

3-to discuss with you the best approach for the functioning of the various Departments and Divisions in order to improve work quality and the best way to meet the expectations of the Minister.

I. Expectations of the Keeper of the Seals.

The Minister of State clearly set the pace during the meeting he presided over in this room on Wednesday, 21 January 2015. He recommended to the judicial and penitentiary staff: team work supported by three (3) key Principles: Cohesion at work, consistent proposals, and speedy processing of files. After this meeting, a copy of Decree 2012/389 of 18 September 2012 on the organization of the Ministry of Justice was distributed to all the officials of the Ministry of Justice. This Decree remains, to date, the reference document on job description in the Ministry of Justice. Thus, its mastery by the staff remains a necessity.

- During previous sessions of meetings of Head of Courts of Appeal and Regional Delegates of the Penitentiary Administration, the Keeper of the Seals selected specific themes and at the end of deliberations, instructed judicial and penitentiary staff to:

- curb prison overcrowding (Annual Meeting of Heads of Courts of Appeal and Regional Delegates of the Penitentiary Administration of 17 and 18 September 2015);
- implement alternative sentences to imprisonment and fines (Annual Meeting of Heads of Courts and Regional Delegates of the Penitentiary Administration of 18 and 19 August 2016).

- **Circulars of the Keeper of the Seals** targeted specific aspects of the functioning of the Judiciary which are areas of concern to the Ministry of Justice and in particular those that are relatively recent which aim at combating **judicial delays** including:
 - - Circular No.8/68/IGSJ/MJ of 29 April 2014 relating to unsigned court decisions rendered;
 - - Circular No.3/13/4/ PPE / DAPG of 29 January 2014 relating to the preparation of appeal files and appeals to the Supreme Court.

Ladies and gentlemen,

II. The managerial and methodical approach that I am presenting to you to improve on work quality is a platform with several branches:

-The permanent quest for performance required from services by Public Authorities, in order to offer users quality services, is guided by Circular No.1/CAB/PM of 18 January 2012 of the Prime Minister, Head of Government that is a true breviary which I highly recommend to all Civil Servants. In addition to the necessary collaboration between the internal structures of the Ministry within the framework of **teamwork**, prescribed by the Keeper of the Seals, the basic rules of the public service are reminded therein: **punctuality at work, assiduity and speedy processing of files**. As well as cardinal values which are expected to be strictly observed by each employee in particular: **probity, selflessness and discipline**.

Dear Directors and Division Heads,

- Within your respective work units, listen to your colleagues, collaborators, and make yourself accessible and available in your offices. The friendly atmosphere that I recommend to you in your work structures is the gateway to staff performance and the foundation of efficiency expected from any service, through the application of the principle set out by the Prime Minister's Office, on Results-Based Management (RBM).

-Similarly, distinguished Directors and Division Heads, pay particular attention to the pedagogical supervision of young Judicial Officers placed under your authority. Permit me to remind you that the supervision of young Judicial Officers is a constant preoccupation of the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seals who, at the annual meeting of Head of Courts of Appeal and Regional Delegates of the Penitentiary Administration held on 18 and 19 August 2016, gave guidelines with regard to this aspect, after discussions on this topic.

-The culture of work and merit should be inculcated in your professional environment, both as key to success, as an objective reference for the evaluation of collaborators and especially as a value to be preserved. On the other hand, it will be necessary to ban, as counterproductive, all value judgments based on subjectivity or prejudice.

- The implementation of the Justice Sub-Sector strategy, for which, the activities of the Ministry of Justice have been split into three programmes 107, 108 and 109, requires that the spheres of action of entities be defined and that work be done in synergy. In March 2017, the Department of General Affairs and the Division of Studies and Forecasts conducted, with the support of experts from MINEPAT, the dual process of evaluating the results chain and updating programmes. This resulted, among other things, in the fact that although the establishment of management dialogue is more than necessary, it is above all urgent. Together, we must resolutely pursue this goal in the coming days. I intend to convene a meeting to this effect, on **Wednesday, 2 August** in this same venue. You will soon receive relevant correspondences.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Permit me to draw your attention to **the importance of the implementation of the Ministerial Roadmap**, contained in Circular No.7 / PM / of 22 July 2010, of the Prime Minister, Head of Government. Drawn up on the basis of the respective commitments of the various working entities, and in line with the configuration of our Programmes, the Roadmap is a tool meant for the implementation of indispensable programmes which should be followed-up. I

wish to remind Directors and Heads of Division that we are mid-way through the 2017 Financial Year, which requires a mid-term evaluation of the Roadmap. In the meantime, data relating to the six-monthly evaluation of the roadmap within your respective structures are awaited at my secretariat **no later than 26 July 2017**. A correspondence was sent to you in this regard.

- Furthermore, **modernization of the Judiciary**, i of which computerization of the judicial system is an indicator, led by the Keeper of the Seals, concerns all of us. The on-going implementation of the Computerization Master Plan (CMP) of judicial and penitentiary services requires support through mastery of IT tools by each of us. In the age of dematerialization of procedures, digitization of data and communications, the computer is a very useful working tool. The Networks and Statistics Information Systems Unit has professional staff, with appropriate equipment, to provide quality training to staff. I urge you to take advantage of that Unit.

In the same vein, I wish to inform you **that a mail tracking software will soon be deployed** at the central mail service and secretariats of different Departments and Divisions.

-Lastly, as regards the promotion of bilingualism, the Head of State through Decree No. 2017/13 of 23 January 2017, that you are called upon to master, set up the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism. As part of the **promotion of bilingualism at the Ministry of Justice**, a sign of the times, Distinguished Directors and Head of Divisions, I urge you to register and to encourage your staff to do same, at the **Pilot Linguistic Centre**, so as to strengthen their capacity in English and French. Similarly, you will ensure that documents meant for users in your work units are presented in both official languages. These include, posters, information on doors, in halls and corridors. In this regard, I recommend that you follow the example of the General Inspectorate of Judicial Services.

Distinguished officials of the Ministry of Justice,

Article 10 of Decree No. 2012/389 of 18 September 2012 on the organization of the Ministry of Justice assigns specific tasks to the Secretary General as follows: **"He shall coordinate the activities of services of the central administration and decentralized services. He shall define and codify the internal procedures of the Ministry."**

My statement above, which I hope will be enhanced at the end of ensuing deliberations, was to give you an outline of the **participative and inclusive approach** that I wish to implement within the framework of the accomplishment of the delicate missions entrusted to me. The contribution of each of you is highly welcome. The modernization and success of the Judicial Institution promoted by the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seals, is a collective endeavour that requires the contribution of each and every one. We can borrow from the motto of the University of Yaounde in the 70s and 80s: *"Sapientiacognitiocollativa"*, which means: "Knowledge is a collective endeavour".

Ladies and gentlemen, this is the work platform that I am proposing to you for the improvement of services in our respective structures. It is on this note that I **pledge on our behalf to be resolutely committed to work. Together, we shall succeed. Yes we can.**

To conclude, I wish to state that I am available and open to any contribution. The doors of my office are wide open.

I thank you for your kind attention.

