

SECTION 7 IMPROVING POLICY-MAKING

7.1 Improving policy presentation

7.2 Enhancing policy co-ordination

7.1 Improving policy presentation

Details of government policy is disseminated by:

- paid publicity (e.g. through advertising);
- press and information service responding to the media and supplying them with news and information; and
- many ministries (and departments) publishing annual reports.

The Director of Information in the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunication is the official government spokesperson with responsibility for:

- co-ordinating the information activities of the various government departments represented in the rural areas;
- keeping the public informed on government activities, policies and plans;
- assisting each government department/ministry to achieve its aims through appropriate communication campaigns; and
- gauging the public's response to government activities.

The Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications is decentralised, with officers attached to various large ministries to offer on-the-spot advice on communication issues.

Officers of the Ministry of Information, Posts and Telecommunications are not involved with policy development of the ministries they are attached to, nor in Government policy development generally.

The following approaches are employed to convey the government message:

- *Government gazette*
Every Thursday of each week the Government Gazette is issued with key decisions that have been made. This is the official government communication.
- *Press briefings*
Press releases are made frequently by the Department of Information.

- *Press conferences*
These are made by government ministries when there is a major policy event or decision.
- *Ministerial interviews*
These are organised by the Department of Information from time to time when there is a topical issue in any ministry.
- *Publicity campaigns*
During the introduction of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme, there was a concerted publicity campaign carried out by the government through radio and television, through the placing of numerous posters in public places, publications and factsheets were produced by the Department of Information.
- Major Presidential addresses, e.g. Opening of Parliament, State of the Nation Address to Parliament, Independence Day Celebrations.

Supporting material

Government Gazette

7.2 Enhancing policy co-ordination

Government Cabinet Committees serve to co-ordinate government policy.

The Cabinet Office serves Cabinet and the network of Cabinet Committees, which consider and authorise government policies. Ministers with policy initiatives present them to the Cabinet but they may be referred to the relevant Cabinet Committees for detailed examination. Most Cabinet Committees have shadowing officials' committees consisting of public servants who give expert advice.

The main Cabinet Committees cover such areas as legislation, parastatals and economic and financial matters. The Cabinet Committee on Legislation, for example, considers all draft legislation proposed by ministries and outlined at the Opening of each Parliamentary Session by the President. The Committee ensures that all legislation conforms to government policy, assigns priorities and monitors progress through Parliament.

Further, in 1993, a Monitoring and Implementation Department was established in the Office of the President to track implementation of Cabinet decisions, government programmes and projects including the implementation of the Reform Programme.

Supporting material

State of the Nation Presidential Address, Opening of Parliament, 1994