

CHAIRMAN'S SPEAKING POINTS

- The Journey to Start-up
 - ❖ This has been a very rocky road – more like a climb up El Tucuche on a day with low cloud. It has been challenging both for the various boards of the Authority, and for our line Ministries, Ministers and their PS's. Our chief executive position is that of Director. Each of the three Directors who have served have given tirelessly to help to put the Authority on track. I know that the present Director, Sharifa Ali-Abdullah not only has the technical qualifications to lead a start-up operation, but to me one of her most valuable attributes has been her insistence on staff being well prepared for meetings. Wherever she is, the documents are always available and in order, and also relevant up to date information. She can, simply produce helpful presentation on a flash drive at the drop of a hat.
 - ❖ I particularly want to recognise the work done by the previous Boards to get the Authority off the ground and to thank them for their sterling contributions , 2009-2012; 2012-2015, and the new Board, who have a great deal of information to assimilate.
 - ❖ In 2009 we had no accommodation, and for many years there was only one member of staff who was the Director, sometimes assisted by an OJT. Even the production of documents for Board Meetings was challenging The first Strategic Plan was developed in 2011
 - ❖ In 2009 the first Board had two days on retreat and established a matrix identifying all the activities that would be required by the Authority in order to put the 2000 legislation for children in effect. It also identified the complement of staff which would be needed and began to try and put that staff in place.
 - ❖ For a long time the Authority had only 10 technical and 4 support staff to work on the preparations for start-up. It was to be a long road, and although the Organisation Structure was approved in June 2013 it was not until the 28th of January 2014 that compensation for new organisational structure was approved. The support of the Child Protection Task Force, which was in place between about December 2013 and May 2014, was valuable in this exercise.

Despite those early handicaps, the Authority is entirely on track with all of its statutory monthly meetings – the last minutes were headed the 83rd meeting.

- Budget
 - ❖ Authority up-to-date with all external Audits

- ❖ PSIP allocation – 8 million dollars
 - ❖ Recurrent expenditure – 30 million dollars. CA initially requested 71 million dollars but received 30 million. This is insufficient to cover cost of anticipated operations. As a result, Authority made a request during the mid-term review for additional funds (27 million dollars)
 - ❖ Releases have been made on a timely basis
- Expectations of the Children’s Authority:
 - ❖ All children have a right to be properly nurtured; to be exposed to the things which will help them develop their true potential
 - ❖ The Children’s Authority is intended to be an Agency which is very heavily focussed on customer service.
 - ❖ When children are taken into care and come to the attention of the court, that we have the resources for the court to be able to place them somewhere.
 - ❖ Focus on Public Education and continued stakeholder sensitisation
 - ❖ Key Changes to the Children’s Package of Legislation

Proclaimed with effect from Monday, May 18, 2015

 - ❖ Definition of a child (person under 18)
 - ❖ New options that can better respond to the needs of children, and represent a new beginning in the way issues related to children will be addressed
 - ❖ New range of sexual offences against children (sexual penetration of a child; sexual touching of a child; child pornography; meeting a child following sexual grooming; female genital mutilation)
 - ❖ New offences against children with respect to cruelty
 - ❖ Prohibition on corporal punishment as a form of reasonable punishment, except by parents
 - ❖ New compulsory age of education (move from 6-12 years to 5-16 years)
 - ❖ Position of Trust and penalties for breach of said position of trust
 - ❖ New evidential and procedural provisions with respect to children (both victims and offenders) appearing before Courts

Vision for the Children’s Authority - beyond fulfilling its legislative mandate is to build on the things we learnt when the Family Court was established. People’s interface with an organisation is vastly improved when the staff put customers first, treat everyone with respect, give the necessary time to understand their issues, and an environment that encourages communication. The underpinning

must be access to competent professional support and cooperation with the many people involved at all levels in concern for the well-being of children.

We owe a great deal to all the unsung volunteers in this area, and are committed to moving forward in a way which will live up to the expectations of all.