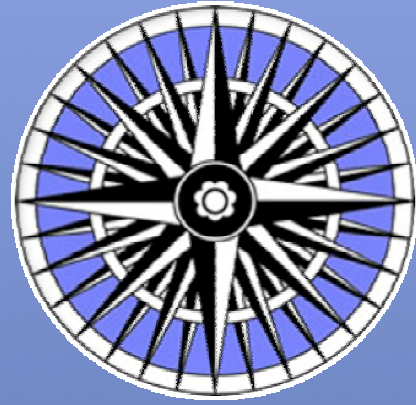


INTERNATIONAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRUST



ZAMBIA CASE STUDY

MARCH 2007

Fostering Trust and Transparency in Governance

*Investigating and Addressing the Requirements for Building Integrity
in Public Sector Information Systems in the ICT Environment*

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INTRODUCTION

- 1 At the time of the study, January to March, 2007, the Government of Zambia had introduced major reforms in the public sector, including a computerised human resource and payroll system. The system was planned to introduce better control of the establishment, improve information handling, eliminate the loss of vital information and improve work flow. However, paper-based records systems still needed to be enhanced, and strategies for managing electronic records and digital information needed to be developed, to strengthen data quality, ensure that important evidence was preserved and support transparency in government. The study explored the development of the human resource and payroll system and its recordkeeping functionality, as well the paper-based records systems in Zambia public service.

Terms of Reference

- 2 Michael Hoyle and Dr Peter Sebina visited Lusaka, Zambia, in January 2007. The methodology for the study visit involved:
 - collecting qualitative information, including conducting interviews and carrying out documentary research about public sector reform, electronic governance initiatives, pay and personnel processes, and records management, with the aim of developing an understanding of how and when public service appointments were managed and documented
 - gaining an understanding of the information flows between the human resources functions and payroll.
- 3 Michael Hoyle and Peter Mazikana made a follow up visit to Lusaka in March, 2007. The methodology for the second visit involved:
 - comparing the records for a group of public servants held in the Public Service Management Division and in the employing ministry against the information held in the human resource information and payroll system
 - collecting further qualitative information from ministries on their recordkeeping systems and practices and gaining an understanding of the challenges facing the Zambia public service relation to managing human resources and controlling the payroll.

Acknowledgements

- 4 The IRMT is grateful to the Government of Zambia for generously permitting this study to be conducted and for allowing its officials to participate freely. It would like

to thank the many government officials who offered support and assistance. In particular, Mr Akim Sakala, Director, Payroll Management and Establishment Control (PMEC), and Ms Cathy Mkala, Director, Human Resource Information and Planning, gave significant support and time to the research team in providing extensive background information on payroll and human resource matters and by organising meetings. Mr Sanford Sekelechi, Assistant Director, Records Management Systems and Policy Planning, assisted with co-ordination of the visit, attended a number of meetings with team members and gave excellent background information on records management issues. In addition, Ms Judith Namutowe, Acting Assistant Director of the National Archives, also attended various meetings and provided excellent assistance during the data verification exercise. See Appendix A for a full list of the people consulted.

- 5 This case study represents a snapshot in time. The observations it contains were current as of March 2007. Since then, new developments and improvements have taken place on a regular basis, and therefore, the case study does not represent the situation at present. Nevertheless, the findings in the report should provide useful background in understanding the challenges of providing secure and reliable records as evidence in the electronic environment and in sharing the lessons learned. The IRMT made every effort to verify the information in the report. The officers interviewed did not always have the same views, and the aim was to present a balanced perspective. The IRMT takes full responsibility for any errors that may have been reported inadvertently.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 6 Public service reforms have been underway in Zambia since the early 1990's. There were extensive reviews and changes in the management of public servants, including establishment control and management of the payroll. In addition, Zambia launched an ICT Policy which addressed a range of technology developments across the country including e-Government and information systems in the public sector. (paras 13 to 17)
- 7 The public service had well defined processes for human resources, including recruitment and pay, which are set out in the Terms and Conditions of Service. These processes defined the information flows between the central Public Service Management Division, ministries, departments, regional and district offices, and the Ministry of Finance. (paras 18 to 30)
- 8 As part of the overall management of human resources, paper-based documentation was issued at the point of initial employment, and a number of open, confidential, salary and other files were created, along with indexes, at various levels for each public servant. (paras 31 to 37).
- 9 A human resources information system had been successfully introduced and was used to support establishment control and run the payroll. Its implementation

involved extensive planning, stakeholder involvement, communications and other project management considerations. (paras 38 to 78)

- 10 There were some problem areas. An older legacy system was still in operation, which meant that some staff were being paid outside the central establishment payroll. There were difficulties in the management of paper-based human resources records, including access to files, delays in filing and lack of clarity surrounding the fate of input documentation into the electronic system. (paras 79 to 94)
- 11 Records management responsibilities were split between the Public Service Management Division and the National Archives. An attempt had been made to clarify roles and responsibilities through a Public Records Policy. (paras 95 to 118)
- 12 This report summarises the challenges facing the Zambia public service in managing human resource and other records at paras 119 to 124.

FINDINGS

Public Service Reforms and ICT Policy Development

- 13 During the 1990's, Zambia embarked on an extensive Public Service reform programme. As part of this programme, a public service management project was launched in November 2006, with the aim of 'building upon rightsizing, pay and performance management reforms that the Government had pursued since 1993.'¹ Of particular interest were three goals:
 - all government ministries and institutions were to have staffing complements that were appropriate to their agreed mandates and affordable in relation to their Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) ceilings
 - employee remuneration was to be related to the job and performance; the public service was to be able to attract and retain essential technical, professional and managerial staff; pay arrangements were to support and reinforce improved service delivery; and increases in pay levels were to be consistent with the resource envelope
 - personnel emoluments and establishments for the public service were to be effectively managed and maintained at approved levels:²
- 14 Some of the activities to be implemented under the last sub-component included:
 - building adequate business and technical capacity to manage and maintain the payroll management and establishment control system

¹ Public Service Management Project Guide 2006

² Public Service Management Project Guide 2006

- completing verification of establishment and staffing to ensure the effective rollout of the system in all ministries
 - establishing a department for managing the payroll and establishment control systems
 - introducing a Payroll Management and Establishment Control (PMEC) System, with associated training activities
 - strengthening payroll integrity
 - decentralising the information technology infrastructure to the provincial level
 - interfacing the payroll management and establishment control system with other systems, such as Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS).
- 15 The public service management programme was supported by the Swedish International Development Agency, the UK Department for International Development, and the World Bank International Development Agency³
- 16 The key ministry responsible for human resources and payroll reforms was the Public Service Management Division (PSMD). Relevant objectives in the Division's *Strategic Plan 2006 – 2010* (March 2006) included:
- providing a clear human resources policy framework and monitoring its implementation in order to ensure effective human resources management in the Public Service
 - undertaking human resource planning and providing accurate human resources information in order to facilitate effective utilisation of human resources in the Public Service
 - managing the PMEC System effectively to monitor and control expenditure on personal emolument in the Public Service
 - improving records management in order to facilitate timely decision-making in the Public Service.⁴
- 17 A *National Information and Communication Technology Policy* was issued in March 2007. The Policy set out a framework that would enable Zambia to join the global economy with ICT identified as a priority sector, as set out in the Fifth *National Development Plan 2006–2010*. The Policy described a number of information management initiatives, including initiatives relating to establishment and payroll

³ Public Service Management Project Guide, 2006

⁴ Republic of Zambia. *Strategic Plan for Public Service Management Division* (2006 – 2010). Public Service Management Division, March 2006.

control in the public service, integrated financial management systems, and e-Government.⁵

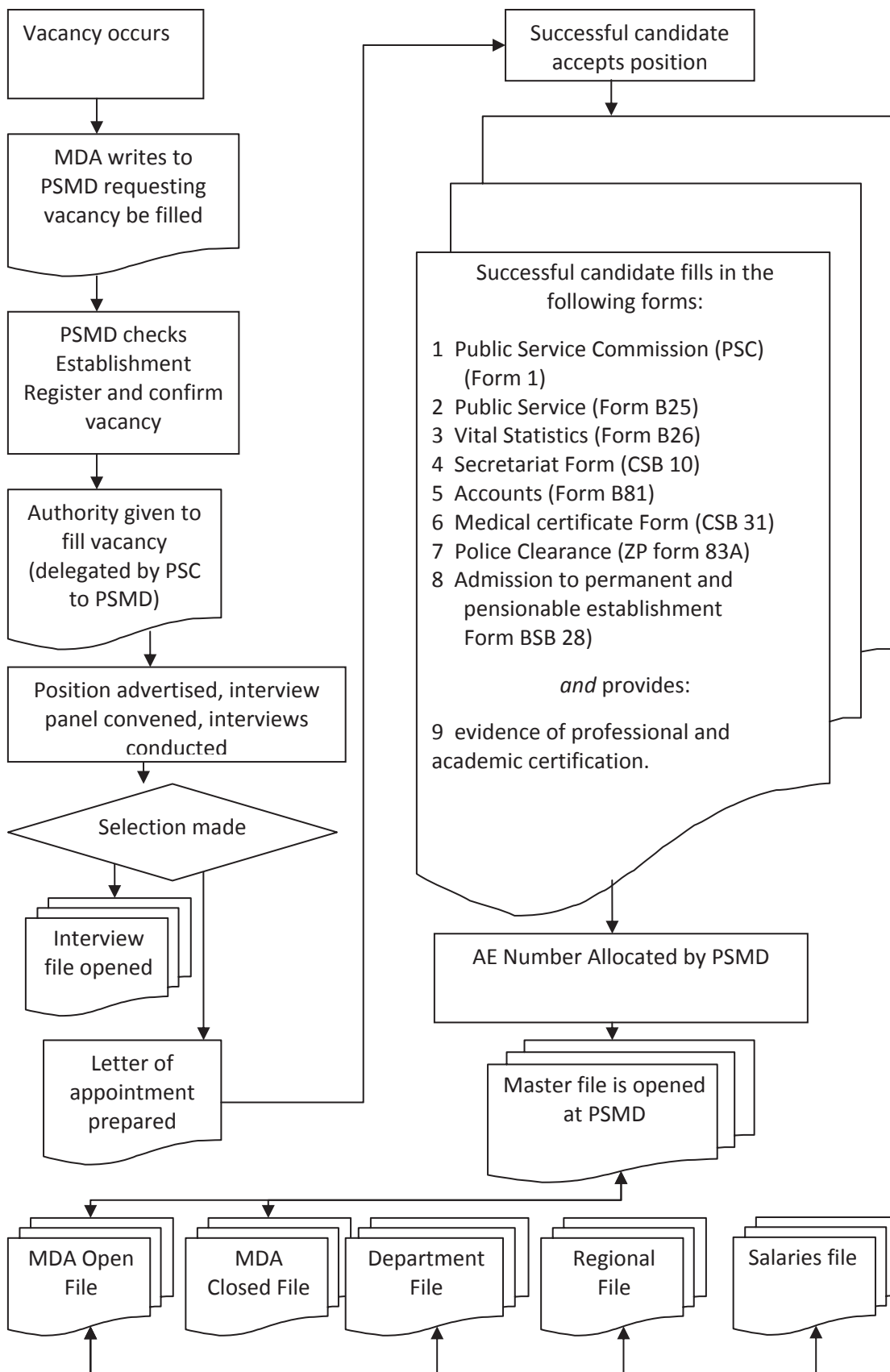
Human Resources and Pay Processes

- 18 There were approximately 120,000 employees in the Zambia public service, including 70,000 teachers, 20,000 health workers, 12,000 police and 8,000 in the agriculture sector. There also were classified positions, including drivers, cleaners and office orderlies. These positions were not permanent and pensionable, but they drew long service awards. The Terms and Conditions of Service for the Public Service, issued by the Secretary to Cabinet in June 2003, noted that no appointment, promotion or transfer should be made to any post in the Public Service unless the post was approved, funded and was vacant.⁶ Compliance with these and other regulations required documentation.
- 19 The recruitment process in the public service was guided by an approved establishment register, which listed all positions. There were separate commissions for teachers, the police, prisons officers and the Judiciary.
- 20 The process is summarised in the chart below:

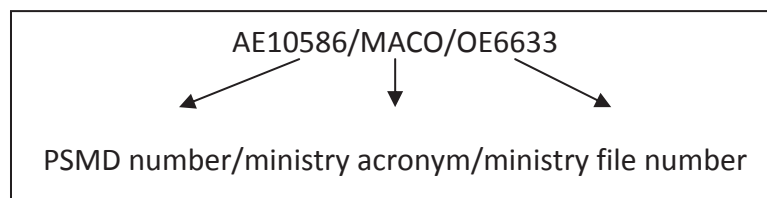
⁵ Government of Zambia *National Information and Communication Technology Policy*, April 2006 (launched March 2007) <http://www.mct.gov.zm/pdf/ict.pdf> (accessed 10 April 2007)

⁶ Republic of Zambia. *Terms and Conditions of Service for the Public Service*. Secretary to the Cabinet. June 2003.

Recruitment Process



- 21 When an MDA was restructured, a fast track selection process was sometimes followed. A committee, appointed by the Secretary to Cabinet, assessed applications received from job seekers. When a candidate was identified for employment, a report was made to the PSC, which then recommended employment to the permanent secretary of the relevant ministry.
- 22 When a new recruit accepted employment, a master file was opened in the PSMD for the new officer. This file was given an Application for Employment Number (AE), which was the officer's number until the six month probation period expired and the employee was confirmed into the position. The officer then was allocated a Staff Number (SN). The PSMD managed and issued the staff numbers, which were running numbers used only once. Files held by ministries and departments on employees were also supposed to have this number. For example, a file for a staff member at the Ministry of Agriculture might have the following number:



- 23 A *Man* number (manual employment number) was also used to identify employees on the old legacy payroll system that is discussed below at paras 82 to 83. These numbers were being replaced gradually.
- 24 The Master PSMD file contained the following documents: Public Service Commission (PSC) Form 1 (capturing personal details of the employee); medical form; police clearance form; and arrival advance form. PSC Form 1 had a space for an employee photograph, but it was not mandatory to provide one. Copies of these forms were sent to the relevant MDA, which could decide to provide copies to the employing department.
- 25 The MDA then initiated a P MEC Form OA that captured details relating to the payroll and send it to the PSMD. To this form were be attached copies of the appointment letter and related documents as a record of the fact that the official recruitment process was followed. Information on the P MEC Form OA was entered into the P MEC database, which held human resource information (similar to that held on paper-based files) and was used to control establishment and run the payroll. The P MEC system is discussed in detail below.
- 26 Each month, for two days, authorised employees from ministries (including staff from the regions) visited the PMSD and the Ministry of Finance to update the P MEC system with new data and run simulations.

- 27 The payroll was administered and processed, but the actual payments were made by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning. Monthly funding requirements (cash books) were sent to the Accountant General, who in turn sent them to the Budget Office requesting funds. The Accountant General signed off the payroll and transmitted payments through the Bank of Zambia. Each government institution had a holding account at the Bank of Zambia, and the Accountant General advised the bank to debit the respective accounts and credit accounts of employees at commercial banks.
- 28 The Accountant General had a mandate to monitor whether the wage bill was in line with the provisions of the budget. In view of this, the Accountant General carried out payroll analysis through a head-count and corroborated this with information in the establishment register. Variances were communicated to the systems administrator.
- 29 When an officer retired, files kept at a MDA were sent to PSMD, where information was compared and corroborated. These files, together with the one held at PSMD, were sent to the Ministry of Finance for clearance (for example for checking for outstanding debts to government) and then were sent to the Pensions Office for payment. Once the pension process was completed, the MDA files were returned and retained in the MDA for about five years before being sent to the National Archives Record Centre.
- 30 Casual workers did not appear on P MEC System. They were paid through budgets for casual workers, outside the payroll.

Manual Systems and Records

- 31 Generally five files were opened for every employee: a file held at Recruitment and Placement (PSMD); two files held by the parent ministry (one open, one confidential); one held by the department in which the employee was placed; and one at the MDA salary section. The salaries file was originally held at the Ministry of Finance, but after the devolution of salary and payroll activities, these were sent to ministries. If an employee was posted outside the capital, a further two files might be opened at regional and district office levels. This would mean that a public servant had up to seven active files in addition to the information held on the P MEC system.
- 32 Personnel and other registries were visited at the Ministries of Agriculture, Education and Health and in the Audit Office. Generally most appeared to be reasonably well organised. However, through discussions, and in analysis of systems and files, it became apparent there were problems with the management of the files.
- 33 At the Ministry of Agriculture there were approximately 8,000 staff, and the number was expected to grow shortly by a further 3,500. Personnel files at the ministry were kept in a separate registry. A manual index was used to guide file retrieval. Senior staff noted that completeness of the files was an issue. In addition, although there

was a service counter, ministry staff came into the registry to make inquiries, which presented risks for controlling the location and content of the files.

- 34 Several registries were visited at the Ministry of Education, where the files of the Teachers Services Commission also were held. Accessing the files was not easy. To find a file for a specific teacher, the Teachers' Services Commission number was required. Donor funding had supported computerisation in the registries, but this had not been completed. The Ministry of Education was attempting to computerise at least some of the information using a Microsoft Access database.
- 35 The Ministry of Health was undergoing a major restructuring process that would result in a greater number of personnel. Controlling records and other information about staff had become increasingly problematic. The main registry required more space and needed to be reorganised. Ministry staff needed files much more quickly than the registry's service counter could provide them. While the registry system still was paper-based, the Ministry had embarked on a substantial project to list names and files, building an extensive Microsoft Access database for up to 3,000 staff members. This was demonstrated and appeared help staff in accessing information.
- 36 The Audit Office had 439 staff, with one registry at Head Office. It was not computerised, but attempts were being made to identify an electronic system to automate the file index. Access to the registry and to the files was controlled, and each officer in the registry was assigned files relating to a directorate. Staff in the Audit Office felt that personnel records generally were kept up-to-date but noted that time lapses and delays could occur in filing. Moreover, files might be updated at the Audit Office, but it could take time for the related file to be updated at PSMD.
- 37 It was not possible to study the operations of the registry at PSMD, but the *Public Service Management Division of Strategic Plan 2006–2010* noted that records management systems in the Division were ineffective and that this had led to loss and misplacement of records, resulting in delays in the processing of cases and decision making.⁷ However, the registry did have a service counter and appeared organised and secure. Staff from the PSMD registry were well aware of the records problems that some of the ministries faced.

Electronic Systems and Records

- 38 The Public Service Management Division had implemented the integrated Public Management Establishment Control (PMEC) System, which was an off-the-shelf product of the software company SAP. It covered all public employees except the military, local government and casual staff. Funded by DFID, PMEC was adopted to control the abuse prevalent in an older system that had resulted in ghost workers on the payroll and unapproved allowances being awarded to employees. In the past

⁷ Republic of Zambia. *Strategic Plan for Public Service Management Division (2006–2010)*. Public Service Management Division. March 2006.

there had been no relationship between establishment and payroll. In addition, staff noted that there was a lack of accurate, comprehensive and consolidated management information to support sound decision making. P MEC synchronised establishment and payroll and had enhanced planning, monitoring and control of the wage bill.

39 Implementation of the P MEC System began in June 2004. Objectives during the first implementation phase included:

- clarifying roles and responsibilities for managing establishments and the payroll
- strengthening manual processes and controls
- improving the quality of data on establishment and payroll
- implementing an enhanced centralised computerised system for controlling establishments.⁸

40 P MEC's functionality included:

- organisational management (establishment control)
- personnel cost planning and control
- personnel administration and time management
- payroll processing
- authorisation (security maintenance).⁹

41 The *Terms and Conditions of Service* 2003 (business rules) were at the core of the P MEC functionality, and the establishment structure provided its basis.

42 The System provided for an approval process based on a unique position number. It had the ability to run reports, including a budget input report and a budget tracking report. It was noted when P MEC was being developed that the correctness of the reports depended on data integrity.¹⁰

43 When hiring a new staff member, P MEC required a check to ensure that:

- the National Registration Card was checked and validated
- a vacancy existed

⁸ Republic of Zambia. *Payroll Management and Establishment Control (P MEC) System Sensitisation Workshop*. Undated Powerpoint presentation

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

- the relevant leave quota had been allocated
- there was compliance with the requirement for full names and other relevant employee details
- there was compliance with the applicable conditions of service.¹¹

44 Personnel information could be updated regularly, and audit trails could be generated by:

- date
- time
- old field
- new field
- user
- insert/delete¹²

The audit trail file was secure and could not be changed.

45 The identification and role of stakeholders was viewed as crucial to the implementation. These included PSMD, Management Development Division; Human Resource and Accounting Units in MDAs; Computer Support Services Department; Accountant General, Budget Office; and Internal/External Audit.¹³

46 Managers were expected to be actively involved and make timely decisions for issues including personnel emoluments, budget control and ownership of data.¹⁴

47 Prior to the system going live, an impact analysis was undertaken to consider issues such as user training, data cleanup, sign off of data and corrections. Data cleanup involved verifying information against:

- the Establishment Register: employment and personal data including, National Registration Card, qualifications and bank accounts
- acting appointments
- disciplinary cases

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

- loans
 - eligibility
 - leave balances.
- 48 Public servants completed forms with information that provided vital data such as date of birth, date of first appointment to the public service, and academic and professional qualifications. The forms were submitted to heads of departments, who double-checked the information, making comparisons against that held in paper files, before input into the P MEC system.
- 49 The system could be searched by employee name, national registration card number, and staff number. Searching by name often brought up staff with the same name, so it was necessary to verify the staff member concerned.
- 50 The P MEC system used *SAP R/3* release 4.6c software runs an Oracle engine 8.1.7.4.0 and its operating system is HP Unix.
- 51 Two South African companies were contracted to install P MEC. CS Holdings, which was eventually taken over by Byte Technology, was the main contractor and was responsible for customising SAP software. Intrinsic, which was later taken over by Business Connexions, was subcontracted to install the hardware and operating system before CS Holdings could carry out the customisation.
- 52 PSMD was running the system without outside contractor assistance, which helped develop technical confidence and abilities. It appeared to have very good working relations with the Lusaka office of Business Connexions, which continued to provide hardware support. PSMD had regular contact with SAP regarding licensing matters, potential upgrades and other technical issues.
- 53 P MEC was linked to the Ministry of Finance through a fibre optic cable. The Zambia Telecommunications Corporation planned to lay a fibre optic cable between ministries.
- 54 Backup was done on cartridges. There were two servers: a production server and a development server. The two servers complemented one another and shared common storage. If one server was down, the other took over. Backup was automated and was done daily, weekly and monthly. The system resided at the Ministry of Finance and backup cartridges were kept at the P MEC office.
- 55 The system was networked, and a range of security measures were in place. Segmentation of the network had enabled the installation of equipment to manage traffic at switch level; firewalls were in place to filter access to different modules according to access lists; user accounts had been defined with profiles to determine the data that users could access and manipulate; and new passwords were issued every 30 days.

- 56 There was system documentation for both payroll and personnel administration, but there were some delays in updating the documentation.
- 57 The system had been running for three years, and upgrade options were being discussed with SAP. These would be implemented when funds permitted. Procedures for migration had been developed and were due to be reviewed, depending on what technology was purchased.
- 58 Processing retirement benefits still was manual because of legal constraints. These were being addressed and it was envisaged that in the future P MEC would be used for this function. The system was designed to keep data of retirees or deceased persons for five years.
- 59 The P MEC Support Services Department of PSMD, with a staff complement of 20 (16 were in post), carried out sensitisation and training, updated terms and conditions of service on the software, and maintained and provided reports on the system.
- 60 The Accountant General noted that during the budget process, the P MEC was useful as a means of double checking the bids that ministries made for staffing levels. There were times that MDAs claimed that they were short of staff, while in fact P MEC indicated otherwise.
- 61 Performance indicators included the number of illegal transactions detected annually, the number of system security checks and the disaster recovery operations conducted each year.
- 62 According to the PSMD Strategic Plan, the P MEC system was to be decentralised by December 2010.
- 63 An older legacy payroll system was also operating. Although there were plans to phase it out, it was estimated that there were a couple of thousand public servants still on the system. For example it was thought that about 130 employees in the Ministry of Agriculture out of almost 8,000 were on the legacy system. These employees had been left on the system following the restructuring of the Ministry. After the restructuring process, they had no positions on the new establishment and could not be migrated onto P MEC.
- 64 The Accountant General expressed concern that P MEC was operating alongside the legacy system. He noted that when employees were not on the establishment register, it was difficult to budget for their salary/wage payments or to justify why they were being paid. The Accountant General wanted to have all public servants on P MEC so that there was only one system of payroll in operation.
- 65 It was unclear initially why the legacy system still was operating. Staff in various meetings suggested that officers on the system could be made redundant, that the current establishment register could be expanded to accommodate them, or that they could be redeployed to vacant posts. Indeed, some staff had been redeployed to

vacant posts, but this was not enough to resolve the issue. Ultimately, the main reasons seemed to be that incorporating staff on the legacy system into the establishment would defeat the purpose of tightly controlled numbers and that staff could not be made redundant because of a lack of funding to implement a redundancy package.

- 66 An IFMIS project, which commenced prior to the development of P MEC, was still being developed, with an implementation team in place. The project was contracted out to SOLUZIAN, a Spanish firm, that would use SAP. This would enable IFMIS to integrate with P MEC. The IFMIS implementation team had identified six sites on which to pilot the system over a period of fifteen months, commencing in 2008.
- 67 Ultimately, all finance management subsystems were to be linked to IFMIS, including the debt management system, P MEC, the legacy system (until it was phased out), donor operated systems, the commitment control system and financial management systems. This would enable the Government to manage its budget, accounts payable and receivable, the general ledger, and domestic and foreign debt. It was suggested that once IFMIS was in place, there would be no need for MDA staff to travel to PSMD to update the payroll as this will be done electronically within the MDA.

Tracking Data and Verification Analysis

- 68 The case study included an exercise to track information about approximately 50 public servants on the payroll through the manual and electronic personnel information systems at central and ministry level. For each of these individuals, a check was made of the paper file at PSMD, the paper file at the ministry level and the human resource and payroll data on the P MEC system. This involved checking the employment number (in this situation the National Registration Number), name, date of birth, position titles, designation and grade, duty station, date of first appointment, base salary information, allowances, performance assessment and any pension or social security entitlements.
- 69 Forty-nine files relating to staff at the Ministry of Agriculture were selected randomly by registry staff at PSMD. While a request was made that these be at different levels, the majority selected were at lower levels, often agricultural assistants.
- 70 The documentation on the Master PSMD files mainly comprised the records produced when the individual entered the public service. In the vast majority of cases, all the forms that are required to be on file were on the file, including Public Service Commission (PSC) Form 1, Public Service Form B25, Vital Statistics Form B26, Secretariat form CSB 10, Accounts Form B81, Medical Certificate Form CSB 31, Police Clearance ZP Form 83A, and admission to permanent and pensionable establishment Form BSB 28. The letter of appointment, letter of acceptance of appointment and details of posting to a region or district, if relevant, were also included along with copies of educational qualifications and occasionally other documentation, such as a copy of the National Registration Card or birth certificate.

- 71 In a number of cases, this documentation had been obtained or created retrospectively. For instance, the forms might have been completed in 1999 even though the officer entered service in 1985. Nevertheless, the core documents made a solid base for P MEC processes, as well as for the subsequent administration of the retirement and pensioning of these employees.
- 72 The same 49 names then were tracked through the P MEC system. The system had a number of screens and fields, and those that were populated and used are marked with a tick below:

Personal Data	Field in use?	Payroll Data	Field in use?	Time Data	Field in use?
Birth date	√	Basic Pay	√	Employment Percent	√
Gender	√	Bank Details	√	Daily Working hours	√
Full Name	√	Ext. Bank Transfer	√	Weekly Working Hours	√
Nationality	√	Rec. Payments and deductions	√	Monthly Working Hours	√
Language	√	Additional Payments		Annual Working Hours	√
Address		Loans		Weekly Work Day	√
Family Related Person		Taxes			
Actions	√	Membership fees	√		
Original Assignment	√	External Insurance			
Challenges (for example disability)					
Contract Elements					
Monitoring Tasks					
Qualifications					
Internal Data					
Date specification (for example performance appraisal)	√				
Additional personal data (for example tribe)					
Grievances					
Personal ID's					

- 73 A number of fields were not in use, and two were apparently unlikely ever to be used as they were structured to support South Africa government activities, for which the system was originally designed. These related to taxes and external insurance. PSMD hoped to populate other fields once additional funding became available.

- 74 Of the 49 names, 15 could not be found on the P MEC system. It was possible that these staff had retired, resigned or died prior to the introduction of P MEC or that they were still on the older legacy system.
- 75 The majority of the remaining 34 staff members were easily identified by NRC number on the database. The data between the PSMD file and the P MEC system was fairly consistent with only minor variations, generally due to the staff member having moved positions, been promoted, or had an increase in pay.
- 76 The same information then was checked against the Ministry of Agriculture open files. Accessing open files of staff by name was difficult, and having the NRC Number was not sufficient. It was necessary to know the Ministry's employee reference number to retrieve the files. While some of these were identified from the PSMD file, the information was not easily accessible. The problem was exacerbated by the Ministry's alphabetic index, which had not been updated since 2000. Eventually ten of the 49 files (20%) were found in the Ministry. Registry staff suggested retrieving departmental files to make up for the lack of Ministry records. After some delay, this yielded a further 16 files. Ultimately, files were available either at the ministry or the departmental level for 53% of the employees in the sample.
- 77 Documentation on the 26 files was fairly consistent. It included copies of the forms found on the PSMD file along with copies of qualifications and certificates, leave forms, information on postings, secondments, and allowances. The data appeared to be in line with what had been found at PSMD and on the P MEC system. A few performance assessment forms were identified and at least one record of threatened disciplinary action.
- 78 In three cases it was confirmed that the staff member who could not be found on the P MEC system had either resigned, retired or died. In two of these cases it was hard to identify what had happened as there appeared to be misfiled papers from another staff member. In the other case, the file could not be located. This suggested that the staff member might no longer be employed in the public service. It was surprising that no documentation could be retrieved at the Ministry or the PSMD to indicate what had happened to that employee.

Implications of Recordkeeping for Human Resource and Payroll Management

- 79 *A National Information and Communication Technology Policy* was developed by the Ministry of Communications and Transport and issued in March 2007. The policy noted that the infrastructure needed to support ICT development was inadequate and fragmented, that there was a lack of an institutional framework to co-ordinate and promote e-Government, and that there was inadequate manpower in information technology. It also indicated concerns about security of information as well as inadequate mechanisms for information flow. While the National Archives was mentioned in terms of poor accessibility of its holdings, there were few direct

references to records or document management, despite the major implications that this had for data integrity.

- 80 There was considerable room for improving the management of manual and electronic records. Information from these records was used to populate ICT information systems and provided hard copy evidence of transactions. During the development of P MEC, the developers concluded that to avoid a situation of ‘garbage in – garbage out’ and to ensure the accuracy of information, a major head count and document verification exercise should be undertaken across the public service. This included checking information against personnel files. This had been an important aspect of ensuring data integrity at the development stage, and there was an equally important ongoing need to ensure that records were properly managed to facilitate the verification of information on the system on a continuing basis. The danger was that, while P MEC was well established and was operating well, its functionality could be eroded by the limited information held at PSMD and by poor recordkeeping at ministry level.
- 81 Overall, accessing manual files was problematic if individual staff numbers were not known. Name indexes were patchy at best. While the development of standalone simple Microsoft Access databases in some ministries was a start, there needed to be a co-ordinated approach to the introduction of electronic document and records management systems (EDRMS) so that records could be properly managed and accessed.
- 82 The proliferation of staff and file numbering systems also was of concern. Up to four different numbers were used: 1) AE number given at first employment, 2) a Staff Number given once the appointment was confirmed, 3) a *Man* number on the legacy system and 4) a National Registration Number. In addition, there were separate numbers for those who were appointed by various commissions. For instance, the Teacher Services Commission allocated TSC numbers. One official said that sometimes staff never received a Staff Number but simply retained the AE Number throughout their careers. The difficulties of retrieving files at the Ministry of Agriculture highlighted the problems resulting from using different file numbering systems for the same employees.
- 83 During a number of discussions, the suggestion was made that the National Registration Number could replace the AE number given by PSMD. At the Ministry of Agriculture the Department of Human Resources and Administration was considering using National Registration Numbers since each person of the age 16 and above had been assigned one. According to one official, the use of these numbers ‘would bring sanity’ since many people shared similar surnames and initials. For instance, in a given province there might be many employees with the surname Phiri, with similar initials. The use of National Registration Numbers would enable easier identification. At the time of the study, if a staff number did not appear on the payroll, the National Registration Number was used. Consistent numbering across the Public Service with a link to name on both P MEC and manual indexes and files would greatly expedite access issues.

- 84 Decisions were required regarding what documentation needed to be held on which file and how many files were actually required for each public servant. While PSMD files appeared to contain consistently good documentation regarding an employee's first appointment, there was little or no information on subsequent employment history. Following confirmation of employment, all key actions took place at ministry and provincial levels. The central file at PSMD was not kept up to date since as many of the human resource actions did not need PSMD sanction. Ministry files contained the greatest quantity of information, and in many respects they were, in effect, the master files. However, often records could not be found at ministry level, which resulted in departmental files being used as the primary files.
- 85 In addition, filing tended to be slow, and some records were not filed at all on ministry files. The existence of separate salaries files added another layer of complexity to the manual systems. A brief analysis of these files indicated that many of the records were the same as those on the open personnel file. This included the letter of appointment, vital statistics form, arrival advice and payment of salary. Several senior officers indicated they were aware of these issues but that limited resources were a significant problem in tackling them.
- 86 There was a need to consider whether confidential files were required, particularly given the growing practice of 'openness' in public sector management. Confidential files fragmented information on public servants, occupied valuable storage space and resulted in extra expenditure on materials and staff time.
- 87 A number of the staff responsible for human resource management referred to instances where employees colluded with staff in registries, or with other officers who had access to records, to remove documents from files. This occurred mostly in connection with disciplinary situations. While human resources managers did not want to speculate about how this happened, according to PSMD officials, paying money to registry staff was the most common method. Data security was one of the reasons staff were adamant that classified registries were required. Keeping close control of sensitive information was considered an imperative for proper human resource management and this could only be undertaken by a few trusted staff.
- 88 The Permanent Secretary in the PSMD acknowledged the key role that good recordkeeping should play in ensuring the control over numbers of public servants. He indicated that paper records needed to be well managed before migration to an electronic platform. He felt that, at least for the time being, paper and electronic systems needed to run concurrently and work together.
- 89 Other officials suggested that traditionally records management received low recognition in the public service and was considered to be work that could be done by anyone, regardless of skills and qualifications. Indeed at the Ministry of Health, very junior staff, sometimes including cleaners, had been brought in to help in the registry, and this had led to problems. One official noted that there was a need to examine the legal framework relating to the management of records.

- 90 Initially, there were implementation difficulties, and the stability of the P MEC was problematic, resulting in late payments to staff. However, overall, the PSMD was pleased with its functionality. The inbuilt checks and balances were considered to be of a high standard. Through these, some end-users were caught trying to add or change information on the system illegally. These users were then stripped of their access and input rights.
- 91 P MEC was primarily used for establishment control and payroll purposes, and also to project public sector pension fund information. Ultimately, PSMD wanted to use the system for human resource management activities, such as manpower and succession planning, but some of the information necessary to do this was not yet available on the system.
- 92 It was not clear what had happened to the original data input sheets and the supporting documentation once the information was keyed into the system. These included, for instance, the initial verification information used for confirming staff in positions, such as copies of the NRC card. Originally this information had been housed at P MEC, but due to space difficulties it had been moved off site. An inspection of Ministry of Agriculture records at PSMD indicated that it was not been held there. Assurances were given that copies of all updated information would be held on ministry files, but given the difficulties of accessing files and the delays in filing in ministries, it would have been difficult to ensure that this information was complete.
- 93 Nor was it clear whether there was a comprehensive disaster preparation plan for the P MEC system. A great deal of information appeared to be housed on flash drives. Plans for both disaster preparation and back ups were essential in order to protect data in the system.
- 94 Staff in ministries expressed two concerns about P MEC. The first involved the leave days of employees carried forward from the legacy system. P MEC allowed a maximum of 240 leave days to be accrued and days beyond this mark were not accepted onto the system. The second complaint related to acting appointments. According to the *Terms of Conditions of Service*, acting appointments should not last more than six months. Thereafter, P MEC automatically reverted to the original salary. However staff often acted in positions well in excess of six months, which resulted in problems when the system reverted to the original salary.

Responsibility for Records Management Systems

- 95 Two organisations had specific responsibilities for records management within the Zambia Public Service: the Records Management Systems and Policy Development Department (RMSPD) within the PSMD and the National Archives. MDAs also had responsibilities for creating and managing current files and the National Institute of Public Administration played an advisory role.

96 According to the draft *Public Records Policy 2006*, the PSMD was responsible for oversight of recordkeeping practices in the Public Service, with responsibilities for inspection, and for:

- developing and periodically reviewing records management policies, systems and procedures for the Public Service
- facilitating the installation of standard record management systems and procedures in the Public Service
- conducting regular inspections of Public Service registries
- providing in service training to registry cadres in the Public Service
- maintaining collaborative links with the National Archives of Zambia
- providing consultancy services on records management in the Public Service
- providing professional assistance, advice and guidance to Public Service registries on records management systems and procedures
- ensuring compliance with standards for management of public records.¹⁵

97 The draft policy also gave the National Archives responsibility for:

- drawing up general retention and disposal schedules
- agreeing with the heads of public offices retention and disposals schedules relating to records specific to each MDA
- ensuring that the provision of retention and disposal schedules were implemented
- authorising the disposal of public records other than as provided for by retention and disposal schedules
- preserving all public records of enduring value
- doing all such things that appear necessary or expedient for maintaining the utility of the National Archives.¹⁶

98 The MDAs had responsibility for creating and maintaining adequate documentation of functions and activities of their respective public offices through established record keeping practices and procedures including:

¹⁵ Republic of Zambia. *Public Records Policy 2006*

¹⁶ Republic of Zambia. *Public Records Policy 2006*

- creating and managing current records with established filing and registry system and procedures
- drafting, with the Director of National Archives, retention and disposal schedules
- developing schedules relating to records specific to each public office
- implementing retention and disposal schedules
- transferring semi current records into custody of the Director except in as far as they might remain classified as confidential or secret on grounds of national security, maintenance of public order and protection of personal privacy
- cooperating with the National Archives in the management of semi current records
- ensuring that registry staff liaised with information management staff concerning the appropriate creation use, maintenance and disposal of electronic records in the Public Service.¹⁷

Records Management Systems and Policy Development Department, PSMD

- 99 Records management in the public sector had begun to receive attention in 1991 when government developed a records management cadre; thereafter, secondary education was required for registry work. Following the 1995 restructuring of the public service, librarians were permitted to join the registry cadre due to the shortage of trained records staff. The library training programme at the university level included records and archives modules. Many of these library professionals have been promoted to registry supervisors and chief registry officers. Nevertheless, retaining registry staff was difficult because of low salaries and the poor image of the work, which was viewed by many as only suitable for people who were not educated.
- 100 RMSPD had a small staff complement and faced challenges in advising on registry management across the public service. Its officers noted that departments were struggling with maintaining registry systems. For instance, MDA staff did not always provide copies of correspondence to registries for filing, which resulted in records being lost and the registry staff being blamed for missing documents. Inadequate resources and the lack of training were issues, as was the proliferation of paper documents without provisions for disposal. RMSPD staff suggested that registry management in the provinces was poor. The problems included limited equipment and supplies, the lack of training and the lack of professional support. These issues were not yet receiving attention.

¹⁷ Republic of Zambia. *Public Records Policy 2006*

- 101 In addition, electronic information was becoming prevalent and staff did not know how to manage records in digital form. With the introduction of email system and office automation packages (including word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software, databases and web content), the problems were being exacerbated, and it was likely that some important information would not be captured into any recordkeeping system.
- 102 The PMSD had developed a registry service manual, *Classification Indexing and Numbering of Subject Papers in Government Ministries and Departments*, which was released in February 2006. It provided guidance on keeping files in the public service. The manual identified subjects for classifying correspondence based on *The Statutory Functions, Portfolios and Composition of Government* published in Gazette Notice No 547 of 2004. There were also Government Office Instructions dating from 1984, with a section on registry services and procedures, including mail handling and file management.
- 103 The structure for staff working in the RMSPD and registries included:
- Assistant Director, Records Management Systems and Policy Development, PSMD
 - Records Management Systems and Policy Development Officer, PSMD
 - Records Management Systems and Policy Inspection Officer PSMD
 - Chief Registry Officers (MDAs)
 - Registry Supervisors (MDAs)
 - Registry Officers (MDAs)
 - Registry Clerks (MDAs).
- 104 Registry supervisors worked closely with the RMSPD at PSMD, but they were under the control of MDAs. RMSPD had quarterly meetings with registry supervisors including chief registry officers. It had conducted training courses and gave advice freely, particularly when records systems had collapsed. All registry personnel in both central and local government were seconded to ministries and departments by RMSPD.
- 105 The *Public Service Management Division of Strategic Plan 2006–2010* anticipated greater attention to records management in the future in terms of:
- reviewing records management policies, systems and procedures
 - installing and implementing standard records management systems and procedures

- developing and implementing an inspection programme of registries
 - developing and implementing in service training programmes for the registry cadre
 - providing consultancy services in records management.
- 106 The Plan included performance indicators, one of which was legislation on records management, which was due to be in place by December 2010.
- 107 The RMSPD had made efforts to collaborate with the National Archives. Senior officers in the RMSPD felt that a merger with the National Archives would be beneficial.

Zambia National Archives

- 108 The Zambia National Archives had its origins in the creation of the Southern Rhodesian (Zimbabwe) Archives in 1935, which extended its services to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi). A depot was opened in Livingstone in 1947, but it was later closed and its records were transferred to Southern Rhodesia. The depot reopened in Lusaka in 1956. After the dissolution of the Federation in 1963, the Zambian Archives ceased to be a depot and became the National Archives of Zambia.
- 109 The National Archives, established by an act of Parliament of 1964 (revised in 1969 and 1995)¹⁸, was a department under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was entrusted with the legal mandate for the care and preservation of records. Its role was twofold: to provide archival and records management services, including selecting, preserving and providing access to records of historical value, and to act as the National Library.
- 110 The National Archives was responsible for the control and custody of the public archives, including records of the Government, state corporations, missions, and individuals. The head office was in Lusaka, and there were record centres in the provinces. Officers at the Archives maintained that the organisation was concerned with government records at all stages of their existence. The department co-operated with MDAs, parastatal organisations, and the National Institute of Public Administration in matters of filing, registry procedures and preservation of records.¹⁹ There was an apparent lack of clarity about the respective roles of the Archives and the RMSPD.
- 111 In terms of records management, the National Archives viewed its role as advisory. It carried out surveys to inspect records in individual departmental registries to ensure their proper maintenance with regard to their physical and environmental storage conditions. It could make recommendations to permanent secretaries about

¹⁸ The National Archives Act makes no reference to the holding and use of electronic records.

¹⁹ <http://www.zambiarchives.org/> (accessed 9 February 2007)

improved maintenance of records, but it was up to the department to implement the recommendations. In addition, the National Archives was responsible, under the National Archives Act, for developing retention schedules for public sector records as well for as appraising records deposited in the records centres.

- 112 The National Archives had a staff complement of about 67, about half of whom were based at the headquarters. The others operated six records centres, one in Lusaka and others at Ndola (Copperbelt), Livingstone (Southern Province), Mansa (Luapula Province), Chipata (Eastern Province) and Kabwe (Central Province). There were also plans to open a records centre in the Western Province. Records transferred to the records centres were kept for 20 years from their date of closure and then were transferred to the Archives.
- 113 The Lusaka Records Centre, located in the old Bank of Zambia building, was full. There were three staff working in challenging conditions, which included problems of lighting in the basement, the lack of air conditioning and fire extinguishers, water leaking into the storage areas, rusting shelves, and questionable security. Considerable funding was needed to bring this facility up to a reasonable storage standard.
- 114 In addition, each ministry had a transit records centre for storing closed files before they were transferred to the National Archives Record Centre. Lack of space in these centres was the main driver for transferring records to the National Archives Records Centre.
- 115 The National Archives was supported by an Advisory Council that met quarterly. The Council was composed of the Archives Director as the chair and representatives from the History Department of the University of Zambia, Ministry of Information, National Museums Board, Cabinet Office, and Ministry of Justice.
- 116 The Archives staff had been attempting to sensitise politicians about the role and nature of the National Archives, hoping that this would lead to a higher profile for the institution.
- 117 The Finnish Government had funded an archives digitisation project, beginning in 2005, with the aim of making archival holding accessible (for a fee) through a multimedia room. The project was being managed by two expatriates, an historian and a technical adviser. At the time of the visit, British South Africa company files, maps and other records, including photographs, had been digitised. The project appeared well managed, with those involved having a good understanding of technical and other digitisation issues. The system should help to make holdings accessible and preserve fragile records.
- 118 Several Zambian institutions offered archives and records management training as independent modules or as components of other programmes. The National Archives endorsed a one year certificate training offered through the Evelyn Hone College but noted that the programme's lecturers did not have practical experience. The

Department of Library and Information Studies of the University of Zambia offered archives and records management training as part of the library stream at the fourth year level. Plans were underway to introduce a Masters in Archives and Records Management.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 119 The Zambia public service had made enormous strides in gaining control over its establishment and managing its payroll. There were some difficulties in achieving stability during the introduction of the P MEC, and ongoing staff sensitisation was needed, but overall good planning and implementation had resulted in a system that provided a valuable model for other nations in introducing an electronic human resources and payroll information system. The system had been designed and implemented with a solid understanding of the role of sound records management and the need to involve stakeholders in supporting data accuracy.
- 120 While the development and implementation of the electronic system worked well, there still were problems managing paper-based human resource records throughout the public service. The records continued to be important for verifying information on P MEC and facilitating audit. They also were needed to provide the legal evidence required to protect rights and entitlements and support transparent decision making.
- 121 There were a number of key issues that needed to be addressed. These included:
- the large number of files created for the same public servant at various locations
 - the question of whether separate confidential and salary files were really required
 - the need to update manuals and guidelines needed to be updated, particularly as the service moved toward an electronic working environment
 - the delays in filing and the difficulties in retrieving files at the ministry level
 - the range of numbering systems in use which contributed to retrieval difficulties; the out of date indexes linking names to numbers which added to these difficulties
 - the lack of clarity about which was the master file.
- 122 Staff at all levels were aware of these problems. PSMD staff noted that its strategic plan recognised the need to improve records management in order to facilitate timely decisions in the public service. This could lead to a strategic policy for managing paper and electronic records. Registry staff and records managers needed to be involved in managing all records, regardless of format, and the draft Public Records Policy was a good start in defining roles and responsibilities. However, the split responsibilities

between the RMSPD and the National Archives needed to be reviewed and clarified in the legal framework for managing public records.

- 123 A significant capacity building exercise was needed to bring records and registry management staff into the era of electronic record and document management. This would involve sensitising senior managers on key electronic recordkeeping issues, as well as training and education for records staff and other staff who handled records. The proliferation of unmanaged documents on PC hard drives resulted in a great deal of time being wasted searching for documents, misplaced information and weakened accountability.
- 124 The Zambia Public Service was at the cusp of the digital revolution, and with planned action it could escape some of the information management problems suffered by other nations as they moved into the digital age.

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