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Prof Kobia relinquishes PSC chair



Prof Margaret Kobia hands over official documents to acting chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya to signal her official exit from the commission at a ceremony held at the commission boardroom on 7th March 2018

By Browne Kutswa

Prof. Margaret Kobia officially handed over her position as chairperson of the Public Service Commission on Wednesday to her deputy, Amb. Peter Ole Nkuraiya. Amb. Nkuraiya will hold the position in an acting capacity until a substantive appointment is made.

The handover ceremony was held at the Commission House boardroom and witnessed by commissioners, the Chief Executive Officer who is also the Commission Secretary, Dr. Alice Otwala, Deputy Commission secretaries Mr. Simon Rotich and Ms. Jane Chege and Directors.

In her remarks, Prof Kobia who is now the Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs expressed her appreciation to the commissioners and staff for their support during her tenure as chairperson over the last five years. She urged the Commission staff

to always strive to understand their customers and their needs so as to deliver quality services to them.

“How well you understand your customer and their needs will determine how far you can go in delivering on your mandate and achieving customer satisfaction,” she said.

Noting that the Commission is strategically positioned to contribute to the attainment of the President’s Big Four Agenda, Prof Kobia called for adoption of a collaborative framework and networking with stakeholders, including County governments to ensure they are properly aligned to achieve the desired goals.

She challenged the commission to inject new approaches to work by promoting innovation and creativity in the public service emphasizing that efficiency and effectiveness

must be the hallmark of the public service.

Prof Kobia stressed that the Public Service Commission is an integral part of the government that also plays an oversight role.

“In your oversight role, you also must be part of the effort to provide solutions to the challenges we face as a country,” said Prof Kobia.

Amb. Nkuraiya expressed confidence that the appointment of Prof Kobia to the cabinet signals a new chapter of enhanced collaboration between the executive arm of government and the commission.

“As commissioners, we are delighted in your new appointment and having been our chairperson, we can count on your support to deliver on the huge mandate that the constitution has bestowed on the commission,” said Amb. Nkuraiya.

Commissioner Gichohi lobbies Parliament for increased budget support

By Badi Khamis and Pauline Muriuki

The Public Service Commission has defended its recurrent and development budget proposals for the Financial Year 2018/2019 and requested for increased funding to enable it discharge its mandate effectively.

Commissioner Patrick Gichohi made a strong case for increased budget support, arguing that the Commission performs a critical human resource management role that is key to the realization of President Uhuru Kenyatta's Big Four development agenda namely manufacturing, housing, affordable healthcare and food security. The commission has an expanded constitutional mandate that requires it to promote and ensure compliance with the values and principles of public service and to report to the President and Parliament annually on the extent to which the public service has complied with those values and principles of public service. The Constitution also empowered the Commission to hear and determine appeals from county government public service.

"We require increased budget support to effectively discharge our added



Commissioner Patrick Gichohi

responsibilities as well as the regular functions. Budget cuts will impede our efforts to discharge our mandate effectively," said Mr Gichohi.

Mr Gichohi was addressing the National Assembly Departmental Committee on Administration and National Security during its hearings on the budget proposals for the 2018/2019 financial year at Parliament buildings on 20th February 2018. He was accompanied by Deputy Commission Secretary

Mr Simon Rotich, Director Finance and Planning Mr Dismas Ogot, Director Establishment and Management Consultancy Services Mrs Cindy Songole and the Deputy Director of Public Communications in charge of corporate communications and media relations Mr Browne Kutswa among others.

Commissioner Gichohi told the MPs that the Commission had developed a formula for recruitment and selection to ensure fairness and equity in sharing of public service employment opportunities.

"The Commission recruited 13,041 officers during the last financial year and developed regulations which have gone through stakeholder validation exercise, and will be presented to this house for approval," said Mr. Gichohi.

The legislators commended the commission for prudent management of resources and ensuring that there were no pending bills. The Committee was chaired by Kiambaa MP, Mr. Paul Koinange.

New staff car loan and mortgage scheme ready

By Browne Kutswa

PSC staff can now apply for loans to buy cars and houses under the new staff Mortgage and Car Loan Scheme. The loans will be repaid at an interest rate of 5% per year which is way below the current 14% charged by most commercial lending institutions.

The scheme has already been operationalized and interested officers can download the application forms and guidelines on the PSC website www.publicservice.go.ke.

The Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) that allows the bank to manage the Ksh 100 million revolving fund.

"We are looking forward to increasing the kitty so that more officers can



L-R: KCB Relationship Managers Mr. Swaleh Suri, Mr. Nicholas Njihia and PSC Deputy Commission Secretary Mr. Simon Rotich during sensitization of staff at PSC

benefit," the Deputy Commission Secretary Mr Simon Rotich said during a sensitization of the staff on the programme.

KCB officials from the loans and mortgage department conducted a

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New staff car loan and mortgage scheme ready

from page 2

four days sensitization workshop for all officers from 20th to 23rd February 2018 in the Commission’s boardroom in readiness for the roll out of the scheme during which they explained the eligibility criteria, application procedure and repayment plan. Earlier, the officials held a retreat in Naivasha with the PSC scheme management committee from 13th to 17th February during which they reviewed the MOU and finalized the implementation plan.

The eight-member committee is headed by Mr. Rotich.

The MoU outlines legal clauses governing the scheme, terms and conditions, exit clause and the amount limit that one can access.

Applicants will be required to

PSC Scale	Maximum entitlement	
	Mortgage	Car loan
PSC 8 and PSC 7	Kshs 20 Million	Kshs 4 Million
PSC 6	Kshs 15 Million	Kshs 3 Million
PSC 5 and PSC 4	Kshs 10 Million	Kshs 1.5 Million
PSC 3	Kshs 6 Million	Kshs 800,000
PSC 2 and PSC 1	Kshs 4 Million	Kshs 600,000

repay their mortgage loans and car loans over a maximum period of 25 years and 5 years respectively. Outright purchase of a house or construction will be funded

100% subject to the regulations.

PSC awarded Australian Fellowship

Commissioners and directors of the Public Service Commission (PSC) successfully completed a three weeks course at the University of Newcastle in Australia under the Australian Awards Fellowship Programme. Vice Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya led the team which also included Commission Secretary and CEO Dr. Alice Otwala.

The Australian government funded the programme that started on 17th February to 3rd March 2018 under the theme “Strengthening public service performance and building capacity in effective governance”.

PSC was selected competitively from among other organizations around the world who applied for the Programme. The Australian government has committed US\$ 18.1 million to support 48 Australian institutions to host the program. The program is currently in the 17th cycle since it began.

The application process was spearheaded by the Head of Research and Policy Analysis, Dr. Sylvester Obong’o.

“The selection process is very competitive and involves submission



PSC Vice Chairperson Peter ole Nkuraiya (in wheelchair) with commissioners, CEO and directors after receiving their graduation certificates at the University of Newcastle

of proposals, which then undergo scrutiny from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which manages the scholarships. A shortlist is forwarded to an inter-departmental selection panel which makes the final decision,” said Dr Obong’o.

Through the programme, the Australian government hopes to deepen partnerships between

Australian organizations and developing countries as part of her overall economic diplomacy and international relations goals. It targets current and future leaders and mid-career professionals who can influence priority development and foreign affairs policies in their respective countries.

PSC featured in Australian media

An Australian newspaper has commended the Public Service Commission for participating in the just concluded Australian Fellowship Program describing it as the beginning of an innovative partnership that will have a tangible impact in Kenya.

Hunter Headline newspaper covered the three weeks study visit by PSC Commissioners and directors at the University of Newcastle in its online and print editions. The commission was selected competitively from among other organizations around the world for the programme that was funded by the Australian government.

“This fellowship represents a mutually-beneficial partnership between the University of Newcastle, the Australian Government and the Kenyan Government and we are excited to welcome 14 senior members of the Kenyan Public Service to Newcastle,” the newspaper quotes Dr Patricia Johnson, a lecturer at the University of Newcastle.



(L-R) Dr Jim Jose, Acting PSC Chairperson Amb Peter ole Nkuraiya, Dr Patricia Johnson and PSC Chief Executive Officer Dr Alice Otwala during a break at the University of Newcastle.

Dr Johnson said the initiative aimed to strengthen public service performance, build governance capacity and give the commissioners the opportunity to engage with some of Australia’s leading policy practitioners.

The Commissioners returned from Australia on Saturday. The delegation was led by acting chairperson Amb.

Peter ole Nkuraiya and included commissioners Prof Michael Lokuruka, Patrick Gichohi, Lawrence Nyale, Titus Ndambuki, Veronica Birgen, Judith Bwonya, Catherine Omweno and CEO Dr Alice Otwala.

Hunter Headline is a widely read regional newspaper in the New South Wales region of Australia.

International agencies welcome Prof. Kobia’s appointment as CS

By Browne Kutswa

The appointment of Prof Margaret Kobia to the cabinet by President Uhuru Kenyatta has been welcomed by leading international organizations that she has been associated with.

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (UN-CEPA), Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and Effective Institution Platform (EIP) hailed the appointment as recognition of her role in public service transformation in Kenya and her wide experience and contribution to practice, scholarship and thought leadership in the field of public administration and management.

Prof Kobia is a member of UN-CEPA, Vice-President of CAPAM and Co-Chair of EIP. She is also the immediate former Chairperson of the Public Service Commission and outgoing Vice-Chair of the Judicial Service Commission.

“The Public Service Commission family is proud to have produced a Cabinet Secretary from among one of their own,”



Prof. Margaret Kobia, PhD, MGH

the Secretary and CEO of the Commission Dr Alice Otwala said in her congratulatory message. Professor Kobia holds a sterling record in transformative management of public institutions, research and publication in public administration and management. She is a

recipient of numerous awards including the Order of Grand Warrior (OGW), the First Class Order of Chief of Burning Spear (CBS), Moran of the Golden Heart (MGH) and Commonwealth Gordon Draper Award 2010 for her outstanding public service leadership in the Commonwealth. Prof. Kobia was sworn in at State House, Nairobi on 16th February 2018 and will be in charge of the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs. She has previously served as Director General of the Kenya School of Government, Senior Lecturer at Strathmore University and the Chief Editor of the refereed African Journal of Public Administration and Management for five years. Prof Kobia holds a Bachelor of Education degree of the University of Nairobi, a Master of Education degree of Kenyatta University, and a PhD in Human Resource Education of the University of Illinois in the United States.

New regulations set to streamline the public service

By Badi Khamis and
Pauline Muriuki

The Public Service Commission concluded a key stakeholder validation workshop on the draft PSC Regulations to pave way for their gazettment. The proposed regulations will replace the current PSC Regulations of 2005 and give effect to the Public Service Commission Act, 2017.

The two-day workshop was held at the Kenya School of Government on 7th and 8th February 2018. It was officially opened by newly appointed Cabinet Secretary for Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs Prof. Margaret Kobia.

Participants included the Principal Secretary state department of cooperatives Mr Ali Noor Ismael, University Academic Staff Union secretary general Dr Constantine Wasonga, Human Resource Directors in Ministries, representatives of State Corporations, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices, Unions, County Public Service Boards, County Assembly Service Boards, professional bodies and public officers.

The views and recommendations by the stakeholders will be consolidated for presentation to the Attorney General and Parliament before gazettment of the final document.

Proposals in the draft regulations touch on appointment and promotions, code of conduct and qualifications, disciplinary control, public service efficiency, conditions of service, human resource development, retirement, pension and establishment and abolition of offices.



Prof. Kobia, current CS, Ministry of Public Service and former Chairperson PSC, addressing the stakeholders during validation workshop at the Kenya School of Government, Nairobi

Also covered is the expanded mandate of the Commission that requires it to report to the President and Parliament the extent to which the public service has complied with the values and principles of public service. The Commission is also required to hear and determine appeals from county governments public service.

Prof. Kobia said PSC was committed to transforming the public service into a dynamic, value-laden, professional, transparent, dependable, efficient and effective sector that can catalyze rapid attainment of Kenya's national development goals.

The Chief Executive Officer Dr. Alice Otwala expressed optimism that the proposed regulations will provide a clear framework for effective management of the human resource in the public service.

The workshop was closed by Vice Chairperson, Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya. Also present were Commissioners, Patrick Gichohi, Titus Ndambuki, Judith Bwonya, Catherine Omweno, Veronica Birgen, Prof. Michael Lokuruka and Lawrence Nyalle.

***“PSC is committed to transforming the public service into a dynamic, value-laden, professional, transparent, dependable, efficient and effective sector that can catalyze rapid attainment of Kenya’s national development goals.”
Prof. Margaret Kobia***

Relief for retired officers as NHIF launches medical cover

By Badi Khamis and Pauline Muriuki

Retired civil servants can now breathe a sigh of relief following the launching of a comprehensive medical scheme courtesy of the national health insurer- The National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF).

The scheme targets retired civil servants under the Kenya Association of Retired Officers (KARO). It was launched at the Pan Afric Hotel, Nairobi, on 13th February, 2018.

Deputy Commission Secretary Mr. Simon Rotich represented the CEO Dr. Alice Otwala at the ceremony that brought together over 100 retired civil servants.

The cover caters for general medical conditions, dental, optical, local road ambulance, emergency air rescue service, and last expense costs. Scheme members will pay yearly premium ranging from KSh.65,000 to KSh.100,000.

Beneficiaries will receive a cover of KSh.40,000 and KSh.50,000 annually for optical and dental cover respectively while the last expense will cost KSh.100,000. KARO has over 50,000 registered members out of more than 300,000 retired civil servants.

The NHIF Chief Executive Geoffrey Mwangi said that members will make contributions to the



KARO Chair Mr. Ibrahim Hussein (Left), NHIF Chief Executive Mr. Geoffrey Mwangi (centre) and PSC Deputy Commission Secretary Mr. Simon Rotich during the launch of the Kenya Association of Retired Officers medical cover at Pan Afric Hotel, Nairobi

association, which will then be pooled and remitted to NHIF periodically. He disclosed that the national insurer was in the process of developing a Post-Retirement Medical Plan that will provide

“Securing the medical cover for the members was the first step in ensuring that the retired officers lived with dignity.”

special products targeting retired Kenyans to ensure all their medical needs are adequately catered for.

Speaking during the event,

the Kenya Association of Retired Officers (KARO) Chairperson Mr. Ibrahim Hussein expressed his gratitude to NHIF. He reiterated that securing the medical cover for the members was the first step in ensuring that the retired officers lived with dignity.

In a speech delivered on her behalf by Mr. Rotich, Mrs. Otwala urged KARO to conduct an aggressive awareness and sensitization campaign to enlist as many retirees as possible into the scheme. She further urged KARO to strengthen its systems in order to serve members effectively.

Audit Committee is inaugurated

By Badi Khamis

A new independent audit committee to assist the Public Service Commission (PSC) manage risks and improve efficiency has been established. The three-member committee will be chaired by Mrs. Loise Gathoni Ruhiu for a period of three years.

The committee will advise the Commission on risk management, establishment of appropriate strategies and enhance communication between management, internal and external auditors and the Commission's Board.

It was constituted in line with the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act 2012

Section 73(5) and the Gazette Notice No. 2691 of 15th April, 2016 that requires representation of external organizations to ensure transparency and accountability in the finance management process.

The Committee will also assist the Commission to enhance internal controls in order to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability; review audit issues raised by both internal and external auditors and make recommendations to the board for follow-up and actions to be taken.

Other members of the committee are Mr. Caleb Bulili

who is the National Treasury representative and Mr. George Onyango and Commissioner Patrick Gichohi. Members of the committee are competitively selected following advertisement of the positions, and an interview process in compliance with the PFM Act.

The committee was inaugurated by the former PSC Chairperson, Prof. Margaret Kobia at a ceremony held at the Commission boardroom on 25th January 2018. Also present was CEO Dr Alice Otwala and Commissioners.



Attentive....
Principal Secretary, Cooperatives
Noor Ismail and PSC
Commissioners Michael Lokuruka,
Veronica Birgen, Lawrence Nyalle,
Catherine Omweno and Titus
Ndambuki keenly follow
proceedings during the
stakeholder validation workshop
on PSC Regulations 2018 held at
the Kenya School of Government.



“Happy to see you!...”
KSG Director General Dr. Ludeki
Chweya welcomes Commissioner
Catherine Omweno during the
stakeholder validation workshop
on PSC Regulations 2018 held at
the Kenya School of Government.
Together with them is
Commissioner Titus Ndambuki

PSC now has a fitness gym

By Badi Khamis

A new fitness gym has been opened on the seventh floor of Commission House. PSC Vice Chairperson Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiya, officially opened the gym in December last year.

Mr. Nkuraiya said it was important to have, not only hardworking, but also a healthy staff.

The CEO, Dr. Alice Otwala urged staff to use the gym as there were many health benefits to be derived from exercising.

“Among these benefits are improved physical fitness, weight loss, improved productivity, increased happiness, lower healthcare cost, sense of accomplishment, less stress and



Mrs. Teresa Owiti works out on the treadmill at the gym

healthier habits,” said Dr. Otwala.

The gym has a well-trained fitness instructor, Griffins Omondi, who has been taking staff through rigorous aerobic motions.

Currently, the gym has two treadmills and two cycle machines with plans underway to increase the equipment during the next financial year. The facility is open to all members of staff from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m., lunchtime and at 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday to Friday.

A day in the life of a receptionist

By Badi Khamis

Many will agree that a receptionist is the face of any organization. He is the first point of contact for everyone who enters any organizational building. As the face of an organization, he has to portray its image positively come rain come sunshine. He doesn't choose who to serve and encounters visitors with different attitudes and temperaments.

On a normal working day, the receptionist will at least attend to one angry visitor. I remember serving one who never wanted to listen to me. He was very angry just because I informed him to wait at the reception lobby as I consulted.

“I have never seen a very bad young man like you,” he yelled at me.

I had to remain calm. I knew I didn't have to take it personal. When a visitor yells, you will gain nothing by responding in the same manner; In fact you will create a more hostile atmosphere. In many similar scenarios

“When a visitor yells, you will gain nothing by responding in the same manner...”

you will be forced to apologize to your visitors even though you know you are right.

A receptionist has to master the art of communication; you may need these skills when attending to visitors with personal issues. Such visitors

may arrive at the reception as early as 6 a.m. Most of them you will notice may have travelled overnight from upcountry. When an officer is informed of a visitor at the reception area and subsequently given the first name of the visitor, they may not be keen to see them because of reasons best known to themselves. At this point you will have to figure out on your own how to handle that visitor. Of course, you will not tell the visitors that the officer is not interested in seeing them, but find a suitable answer that will not offend the visitor while at the same time protecting the officer and the reputation of the organization. Indeed, a tough balancing act.

Feedback Corner

"I wish to thank you my dear sisters for accepting my wedding invitation. It was indeed a very pleasant surprise to see some of you at the wedding ceremony. Thank you for your prayers, support and present which was wholeheartedly appreciated. May our God who sees in secret richly reward and bless you and your families beyond what you could ever think or imagine of. Let us remain united at all times. **Rose N. Kariuki**

"On behalf of my family, I glorify God and express my deep appreciation for the prayers, financial and other support showered to me by the staff of the Public Service Commission during the medical fundraiser and funeral arrangements of my beloved mother, the late Mary Anyango Ohando. Special thanks to the Commissioners, the Secretary/Chief Executive, Dr. Alice A. Otwala, and the Deputy Director, Corporate Services, Mr. G.G. Kuhaka, for all the support given and for coordinating the voluntary contributions from staff. To all staff who joined me and my family during the church service at ACK. St. Andrews Zimmerman, and those who attended the funeral ceremony in Kisumu, Seme Sub-County." I ask God to bless you all." **S. O. Okumu, Senior ICT Officer**

"I want to send my heartfelt appreciation to you all for the support you offered my family during the demise of our dear late brother Patrick Kimathi Ngere. To the Secretary/CEO, thank you for facilitating my colleagues who came to condole with us during the burial at Chuka and to the Deputy Commission Secretary Mrs Jane Chege, for allowing the Discipline & Appeals family to visit with us. To Emily Njue and family, thank you. Your expressions of sympathies profoundly touched us. I am much obliged for them! God bless you all." **Purity Kaari Ngere, HRMO Discipline & Appeals**

"May I kindly take this opportunity, first of all to thank our Heavenly Father for ensuring that our health is up to date. Further, may I also take this opportunity to appreciate very much, and on behalf of our family, for the support offered by the Commission, following the abrupt demise of my our beloved son Dominic Omori Ombui, who passed on abruptly in the cruel hand of the devil. May God rest his soul in eternal peace. God bless you all!" **Peter O. Omori, Chief Clerical Officer**

"We, the family of the late Johnstone and Sara Chesitit wish to truly thank you for all the help you extended to us to make our mother's funeral in December, 2017 bearable considering that we had experienced our father's demise in May of the same year. We will always remember how helpful the Commission fraternity stood with us during that trying time. Thank you all and be blessed." **Mary Wanyama, AD/HRMD**

"I am humbled to convey my appreciation to the entire Commission fraternity for the moral, spiritual and financial support during the sickness and demise of my late father, Peter Kitonyi. We, the family was overwhelmed by your support and its our prayer that the almighty God blesses you in a special way." **Mrs.Yusta Ndinda Wambua, SHRMO**

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Vision

To be the lead service commission in the provision, management and development of competent human resource in the Public Service.

Mission

To transform the public service to become professional, efficient and effective for the realization of national development goals.

Core Values

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Equity and Diversity
- Team Spirit
- Transparency and Accountability
- Creativity and Continual Improvement

Public Service Commission departments

- Corporate Services
- Human Resource Management & Development
- Finance and Planning
- Recruitment and Selection
- Board Management Services
- Compliance and Quality Assurance
- Establishment and Management Consultancy Service

Commissioners

Amb. Peter ole Nkuraiyia, CBS	-	Acting Chairperson
Patrick Gichohi, CBS	-	Commissioner
Titus Ndambuki, CBS	-	Commissioner
Judith Bwonya, MBS	-	Commissioner
Catherine Omweno, MBS	-	Commissioner
Veronica Birgen, MBS	-	Commissioner
Lawrence Nyalle, MBS	-	Commissioner
Prof. Michael Lokuruka, EBS	-	Commissioner

Secretary/Chief Executive

Dr. Alice A. Otwala, (Mrs) CBS