1. **Introduction**

It is a great pleasure for me to be here this afternoon to share with you my thoughts on the topic “Promoting Good Governance and Accountability in the Public Service”.

The structure of the presentation is as follows:

(a) General understanding of “Good Governance and Accountability”.

(b) Overview of the situation Regarding “Good Governance” and “Accountability” in the public service of Ghana.

(c) Challenges

(d) The role of the PSC in promoting good Governance and Accountability in the Public Service

(e) Conclusion

2. **Governance**

“Public Governance”, as defined by the UNDP, refers to the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs. Governance is not only limited to the public sector; it also has relevance in the private sector, as well as any human institution where issues of leadership arise.

For the purposes of our discussion today, I will limit the presentation to governance and accountability in the Public Services of Ghana.

Good governance involves, among other things, interaction between citizens and state actors, to agree on how, and what have to be done, to achieve common goals and
aspirations. It enables citizens to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights.

In effect, governance is a set of arrangement relating to decisions that define expectations, and enable governments to serve their people, effectively. Good governance is, therefore, the collective effectiveness of all public service institutions.

It includes:

(i) the processes by which people in authority are selected, monitored, assessed and replaced;

(ii) the capacity of government to effectively manage state resources and implement sound policies;

(iii) the capacity of citizens to demand services and exercise their human rights; and

(iv) the responsibility of citizens to respect the institutions that govern political, economic and social activities and observe their civic duties.

2.1 **Principles of Good Governance**

Taking a leaf from the UK publication – “The Good Governance standards for Public Services” - I want to examine good Governance against six (6) main principles:-

1. **Organisation’s Purpose and Outcomes**
   Good Governance is **focusing on the organisation’s purpose and outcomes for citizens and service users.**
Each public service Agency must be clear about the purpose of the organization, objectives and its intended services to the citizens and make sure that all employees in the organization understand them. This will ensure that citizens receive high quality service and that the taxpayer receives value for money in service delivery – e.g. quality health care, water and sanitation.

2. **Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities**

Good Governance implies that Public Service Organisations, their leadership, and staff have clearly-defined functions and roles, and that each individual is clear about his/her responsibilities and those of others, as well as his/her relationships with others in the organization. This clarity of roles and responsibilities facilitates accountability.

3. **Promotion of Values and Ethics**

Good Governance enables the promotion of the values and ethics of the organization by ensuring that individuals in the organization behave in ways that exemplify values and ethics such as:

   a. Accountability
   b. Transparency
   c. Honesty
   d. Integrity
   e. Diligence
   f. Fairness
   g. Excellence
4. **Taking Informed and Transparent Decisions**

Good Governance means taking informed and transparent decisions and managing risk. This includes putting in place a transparent decision-making process that involves good quality information gathering and consultation with stakeholders while making sure that an effective risk management system is in operation.

5. **Employee Skills, Knowledge and Experience**

Good Governance demands of leadership, the commitment to ensuring that all employees have the skills, knowledge and experience that they require to perform well. This also means having the ability to develop and manage people and be able to assess their performance.

6. **Citizen’s Engagement**

Good Governance means citizens’ engagement and their ability to have a voice and to hold public servants accountable for their responsibilities. This calls for the development of systems of interaction between stakeholders and reporting on performance at the various levels of the organisation.

Indeed, the essential conditions for ensuring that public governance produces the required results are, the existence of institutional and technical components of public administration, such as organizational structure, operative processes, managerial patterns and the analytical and operational skills of public servants. Therefore, the process of good governance runs the risk of being ineffective if public service institutions are weak in all, or any of the six conditions mentioned above.
One of the essential hallmarks of good governance is effective institutions of Accountability.

It is of critical importance for the well being of any society and the individuals who are part of it, that their government and the people who manage it, are held highly accountable for their actions or their failure to act.

Accountability is therefore one of ultimate proof of good governance. To ensure that all persons who work in the public service at all levels are held accountable, the governance principles, mentioned above must be in place and working.

2.2. Overview of Good Governance and Accountability in the Ghana Public Service

From the above, it is not an exaggeration to say that Ghana has almost all the governance principles and mechanisms, in terms of organizations, structures, policies, legislations, values and systems, that ensure citizens’ participation and the operation of the rule of law.

However, the question to ask is: is the public service of Ghana effectively practicing good governance? Despite the fact that Ghana has almost all the requisite internationally-prescribed governance structures in place, the essential conditions for public governance to produce results are weak. Institutional and technical elements, such as organizational structures, operative processes, managerial competences, analytical and operational skills of public servants, as well as their ability to deliver quality service to the public do not, largely, meet the required standards.

For example, many public service organizations still do not have well-designed organizational structures depicting clearly-defined roles and responsibilities based on their mandate and specific functions. Job descriptions, rules and regulations are not
clearly defined. Where they exist, the employees are either not aware of them, or they are totally ignored. In some instances, there are overlapping functions between two or more organizations that makes it very difficult to hold any one organization accountable.

There is little investment in capacity development of the leadership in the public service and the promotion of a strong leadership culture. Over the years, the leadership of the Ghana Public Service has been weakened and rendered somehow ineffective through political patronage – a situation from that of political considerations, instead of sound professional and management principles that take into account organizational development and the need to be accountable.

There is a serious leadership gap in Ghana’s public service. Many leaders today are not seeing beyond their own parochial interests. They are, therefore, not developing the tools and skills that could inspire, excite and motivate subordinates to give of their best. This weakness tends to manifest itself in some public service institutions not showing clear signs of accountability and good governance.

There is no doubt that funds and personnel are critical to organizations achieving the set goals and objectives to meet the aspirations of the citizens. However, even without these in the required quantities, a whole lot could be achieved using various systems and mechanisms that exist.

For example, how many state Institutions have credible and objective performance monitoring and evaluation systems which allow them to assess the performance of the individual public servant, and the performance of their organizations? The Performance Management System (PMS) is a critical mechanism for promoting accountability. The absence of a credible and objective PMS by which individuals including the leadership are held responsible for their stewardship is indicative of weak governance.
Accountability is about giving credible answers to issues such as how one has spent government allocated funds, exercised power and control, mediated rights, and used discretions vested by law in the public interest. It is fundamental that those to whom such powers and responsibilities are given should exercise them in the public interest, in a fair and transparent manner and according to the law. They must be made to give an account for their stewardship: if they fail, they should expect to be sanctioned; and be rewarded if they perform creditably.

Even though there exist in the public service, values, ethics and codes of conduct, it is regrettable to mention that not much attention is paid to them. Most Public servants do not know them, let alone practice them and the leadership are not keen in ensuring compliance. Weak accountability mechanisms breed corruption and corruption is the biggest threat to good governance. The perceived prevalence of corruption in Ghana may be attributed to weak accountability mechanisms, despite the existence of organizations that are expected to provide checks and balances in our governance structure. Institutions, such as PAC, EOCO, CHRAJ, IAA, Audit Service, PSC and the Law Courts are all set up to ensure that persons who are placed in positions of authority, who are unable to account for their stewardship or the breach thereof are investigated and if found guilty punished. However, are these institutions performing to expectation? What are the challenges that they face in doing so? Are these challenges being addressed seriously and honestly enough? Your guess is as good as mine.

In recent years, efforts have been made to engage citizens in demanding positive change in the performance of public service organizations. One of these efforts was the directive for public service organizations to develop and publish individual client services charters. These charters are supposed to inform the citizens about available services within the organisations to enable them among other things obtain their services,
complain, and report to appropriate quarters for redress, if they are not satisfied with such services.

This laudable initiative became “tokenistic” as no serious effort was made to create awareness about the service charters among Ghanaians. Citizens are not able, therefore, to hold public servants accountable for services they should provide.

Improving accountability improves service delivery, particularly for the poor, who have been the centre of government programmes.

3. **Challenges in promoting Good Governance in the public service.**

To effectively promote good governance and accountability in the public service of Ghana, there must be all hands on deck. Everybody, from political leadership, the public servants, civil society and citizens must contribute to ensuring that all the principles I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation are put into practice. Needless to say, that there is an urgent need for a change in our mind set that will enable us do business not as usual; think outside the box and manage the little resources we have more efficiently.

Additionally, the following major challenges that currently confront the public service have to be adequately addressed, if the change in the mind set should be effective:

- Political will and support for building strong and effective institutions,
- Weak structures, procedures, systems.
- Inadequate budgetary allocations.
- Overlapping roles mandates.
- Lack of innovative and strategic leaders
- Poor work ethics and attitudes of some public servants.
- Ineffective/weak monitoring and evaluation of performances of personnel and programmes
4. **The Role of the PSC in promoting Good Governance in the public service**


It’s motto is Efficiency, Integrity, Accountability.

The Commission therefore is a Central Management Agency that seeks to safeguard merit-based human resource management practices, the promotion and protection of HRM functions through the development of HR policies, systems and guidelines for the public services (as defined under Article 190 of the Constitution) and the monitoring and regulation of the performance of public service managers and institutions in the area of HRM.

The expected strategic outcome of the Commission’s activities is the achievement of a competent public service in which structures, processes, procedures, appointments, promotions, disciplinary process, training and development, performance management and rewards/sanctions are based on the values of fairness, trust, transparency, merit and cost effectiveness.

In promoting good governance in the public services, the PSC has, over the years engaged in the following programmes:

(a) **Accountability** – The PSC, through its regulatory functions, requires public officers to be answerable for their decisions and actions on how they apply the power and resources entrusted to them to achieve results by the people of Ghana, through the Government of the day.

   Section 15 of the PSC Act requires the Commission to report to the President, annually, on “the administration of the public services”. The report normally
contains, among other details, the state of the public service agencies, in the area of HRM, including:

- compliance with guidelines and directives on HRM
- agencies with or without governing boards
- vacancy situations within the agencies
- adherence to HRM practices

I must say here that PSC has not been able to produce a comprehensive annual report on the issues mentioned above because of apathy from most public service institutions. We are however, currently putting mechanisms in place to get the public service to respond to our requests.

In the area of appointments, promotions, transfers, etc. the Commission ensures that governing boards and Chief Executives discharge their obligations to the government and other stakeholders in selecting “the best person” for appointment through an open, impartial, objective and competitive process.

In handling petitions, appeals and other grievances within the public service, the PSC holds heads of Department accountable for the management of matters affecting their officers to ensure good labour relations in the workplace based on the principles of social justice, equity, and organizational democracy

The PSC, is collaborating with CHRAJ and other key government agencies to develop and disseminate a new code of ethics and conduct for public servants. This initiative is aimed at providing a strong framework for guiding public servants in carrying out proper and irreproachable behavior to create professionalism, confidence and trust in the public service.

The Commission, has since 2009 collaborated with the Ghana Audit Service in ensuring a more effective administration of the assets declaration forms to public office holders required under Article 286 of the Constitution to declare their assets or liabilities.
Through its Annual Lecture series, as well as circulars, the PSC has publicly discussed and given guidelines to public service institutions on the requirement under Article 284 vis-à-vis the engagement of public servants in partisan political activities.

The PSC has undertaken/is currently undertaking a number of projects which advance the principles of good governance in the public service. These include:

- introduction of a revised policy framework on Performance Management/Appraisal
- manpower audit of public service agencies to ensure right sizing
- review and approval of Job Descriptions, Schemes of Service and Conditions of Service
- Establishment of an HRM database for the entire public service that will be linked to the payroll for the efficient management of the wage bill.
- Interactive visits to Ministries and governing boards/councils to educate members of the principles of good governance.

5. **Conclusions**

There is no doubt that “good governance and accountability” is good for the Ghana. Indeed, it should be obligatory, if we are as Ghanaians, are to attain the high level of growth and development in this era of potential economic boom and advancements throughout the world.

The public service in Ghana has evolve over the years to provide the needed support for successive Government to meet the aspirations of the people. Some progress has definitely been made, in the face of real challenges. However a lot more remains to be done. The commitment of all stakeholders – public servants, the Government, Development Partners, Civil society Organizations – is required to get the public service to realize its full potentials. A very large doze of dedication and changes in the
mindset/attitude of all is required to enable the citizens to be better served to make our dear country take its rightful place among the committee of nations.

Thank you.