

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

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ESTABLISHING A PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES  
COMMISSION: THE TANZANIAN EXPERIENCE

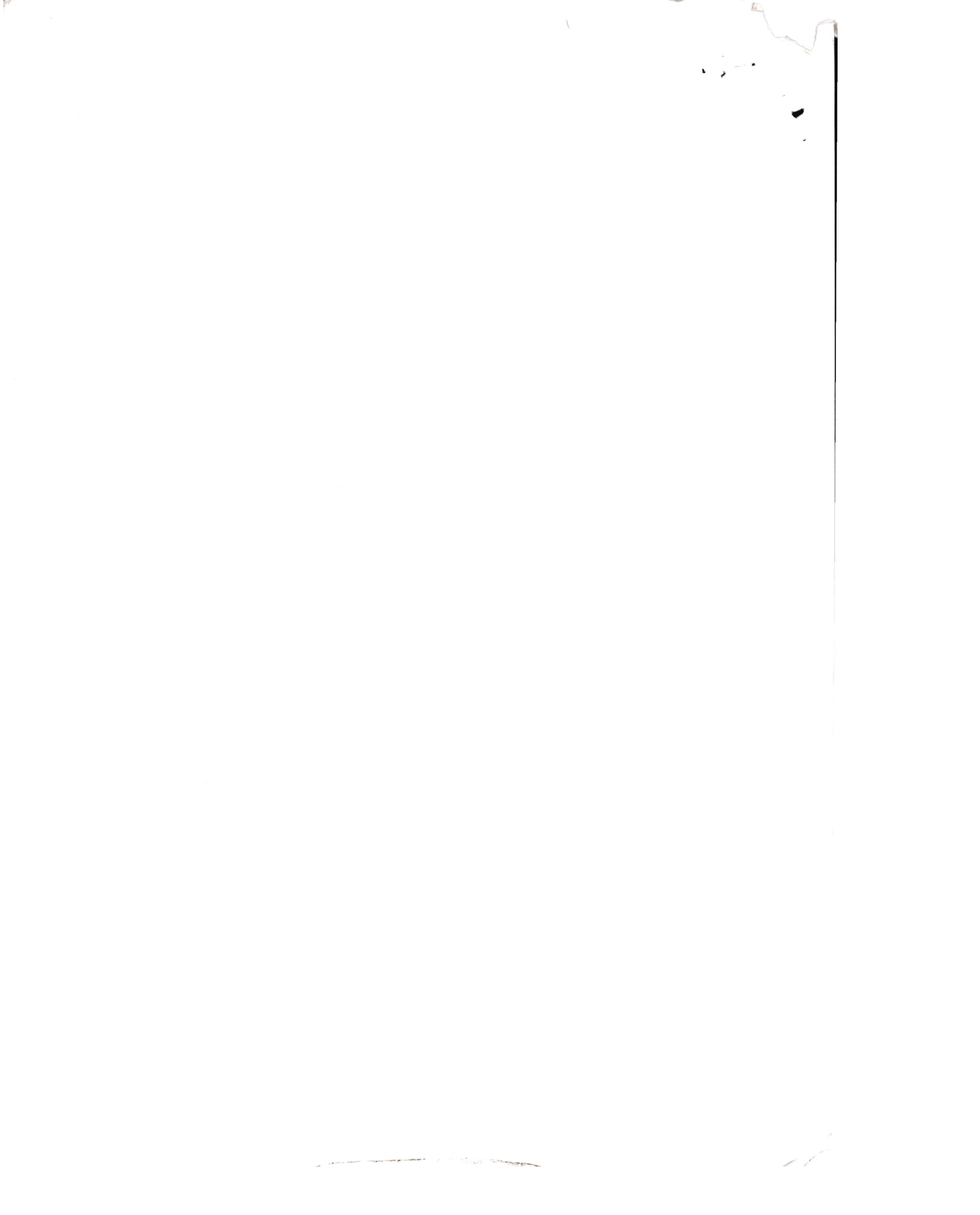
A PAPER DELIVERED  
BY

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FEBRUARY, 2000

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## **The Parliamentary Services Commission of the National Assembly of Tanzania:**

### **1 Background:**

The Parliamentary Services Commission of Tanzania is a very recent development in the history of the Parliament. Since the Parliament's formation, after Tanganyika became independent from the British rule, the staffing and all other personnel matters related to the Parliamentary staff were handled by the Civil Service Department. Recruitment of new staff, promotions, salaries and even disciplinary measures were all under the Civil Service Department.

The System survived for almost thirty-six years. With the advent of the Multi-Party system, it was feared that to continue subjecting the Parliamentary staff under Government control, will be a fetter to the proper operations of a Multi-party Parliament. It was deemed necessary that Members of Parliament from both camps should have confidence in the staff that serves them. Consequently the continuation of the system had to be re-oriented so as to remove any suspicion of Government influence in the operations of the Parliament. The office of the National Assembly should solely be under the Parliament's control which could only be realised by establishing a body independent from Government control, hence the decision to establish the Parliamentary Services Commission.

1. **Establishment of the Parliamentary Services Commission.**

The idea of establishing the Parliamentary Services Commission came into reality in 1997, under Act No. 14 of 1997. The Commission assumed all powers and functions of the Civil Services Department with full control in all matters pertaining to staff recruitment, promotion and discipline. The Commission, under the said act, became functional as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997.

3 Composition of the Parliamentary Services Commission

The Parliamentary Services Commission consists of the following Members:

- (a) Hon. Mr. Speaker, who is the Chairman
- (b) The Deputy Speaker, who is the Vice-Chairman
- (c) The Minister responsible for Parliamentary Affairs –  
(Nominated by the Leader of Government Business in the House).
- (d) Five other Members elected by the National Assembly from amongst its Members under the following distribution:
  - At least one member from the opposition
  - At least one from women members
  - At least one member from Zanzibar

The Clerk of the National Assembly is the Secretary of the Commission and its Chief Executive Officer responsible for securing or facilitating the implementation of all the decisions of the Commission.

#### **4. Functions of the Commission**

The functions of the Commission as conferred on it by the Act are as follows:

- (a) To maintain and control the service.
- (b) To appoint all staff in the Departments of the Service, to determine their numbers and, after appropriate consultations fix their remunerations and other terms and conditions of service. (However, the appointment and tenure of office of the Clerk of the National Assembly rests upon the President).
- (c) To constitute and abolish offices in the service.
- (d) To appoint persons to serve in any capacity in the office of the National Assembly.
- (e) Confirm appointments
- (f) To exercise disciplinary control over staff in the service
- (g) To oversee the MPs Services by preparing and recommending to the President their rates of salaries, allowances and other benefit packages.
- (h) To review the estimates of expenditure for the Office of the National Assembly.

## **5. Life Span Of The Commission**

A Member of the Commission holds office for five years unless he or she vacates his/her office on the following grounds:-

- (a) If circumstances arise which, disqualify him/her to be a Member of Parliament.
- (b) If he/she gives a notice of resignation to the appointing authority.

However, on dissolution of Parliament the Speaker continues in office as a member of the Commission until a new Speaker is elected by the New Parliament. This also applies to all Members of the Commission.

## **6. Achievements Of The Commission**

From its inception up to the end of the year 1999 the Commission conducted 13 meetings and made several recommendations to the President which brought about the following:-

- (a) Increase of Constituency Allowance by 900% over the previous years (from T.Shs. 20,000/= to 200,000/=)
- (b) Introduction of Sitting Allowance to Members during Committee/Parliamentary Sessions (T.Shs. 20,000/= per single sitting)

Besides these, the Commission continues to strive to improve the necessary services to MPs in the following areas:-

- (i) Medical Services.
- (j) Cafeteria Services
- (ii) Terms of Services.

(b) **Staff Development:**

The Act gives the Commission powers to oversee the service, and in the event of exercising its powers the Commission has performed the following activities:-

- (i) The Commission approved the new Organizational Structure of the Service as well as the new Scheme of Service;
- (ii) The Commission appointed Heads of Departments and Heads of Units in the service;
- (iii) The Commission recruited new staff, promoted and confirmed appointments of various employees in the service.

**7. Problems encountered by the Commission:**

- 7.1 Although to a large extent there has been some success during the mentioned period, the flow of funds from the Treasury is difficult. While the Act requires that the funds of the National Assembly be paid by the Treasury from the Consolidated Fund

into the National Assembly Fund, the Government is still dillydallying to implement this.

## **CONCLUSION**

While we acknowledge to have made a grand stride towards realising an independent multi-party Parliamentary System, with regard to Members amenities, staff and budgetary matters, we realise that more work is still required in order to attain full autonomy.



