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| **MINUTES OF THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNIT MEETING WITH THE ACTING CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER** | | |
| DATE:  13 September 2018 | TIME:  11:00 | VENUE: 6th Floor  COO’s Boardroom |

**1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

1.1 Ms Lulu Sizani - COO: Transport

1.2 Shanita Singh - ASD:

1.3 Mr Tankiso Molekane - Chief Director (IR)

1.4 Mr Themba Nkontwana - Director: Multilateral Coordination

1.5 Mr Brian Kodisang - Deputy Director

1.6 Mr Tshovhonala Raphala - ASD: Multilateral Coordination

1.7 Ms Lebogang Selemane - Senior International Relations Officer

1.8 Mr Thabane Nhlengethwa - Senior International Relation Officer

1.9 Mr Oscar Links - Senior Administration Officer

1.10 Mr Felix Mabunda - Administration Officer

1.11 Mr Klaas Thobane - Driver

1.12 Mr Omphulusa Mulaudzi - Intern

1. **OPENING AND WELCOME**

2.1 The meeting commenced at 11h00 and the Acting COO stated that the purpose of the meeting was to know each other and also to discuss risks and challenges facing the directorate.

2.2 She then gave platform for the International Relations (IR) unit to explain the risks/ challenges identified.

1. **CHALLENGES IN THE IR UNIT**

3.1 **Unit Location**

3.1.1 The Chief Director suggested that IR should migrate to the office of the Director General (DG) in order for it to be conducive.

3.1.2 He explained that this would alleviate misunderstandings that occur in terms of logistical arrangements between the IR unit and various IR sub-sections located within various branches of the department.

***Acting COO’s response:***

3.1.3 Instead of moving IR to DG’s office, the Unit rather discuss the MOU with all branches and find ways to work with them on the MOU.

**Recommendations**

* IR to discuss the MOU with various branches and find ways to work with them in terms of delivering on the MOU.

**3.2 Capacity**

3.2.1 It was suggested that vacant posts should be filled due to lack of human resource capacity to monitor the MOU implementation within the directorate.

3.2.2 It was noted that the capacity to monitor MOU content was limited due to overemphasis on travel bookings.

***Acting COO’s response:***

3.2.3 IR should not expect more capacity due to expensive wage packages and to rather utilize available human resources or borrow personnel from other branches to assist with projects. She encouraged that available staff should be developed through IR related training programmes or bursaries in order to capacitate them to deliver on the MOU.

3.2.4Parliament needs to be informed of the role of MOUs signed, therefore IR should be able to justify its existence by means of the MOU achievements.

3.2.5 IR should disseminate information to all branches about the MOUs signed and to convene meetings to report on its work after travelling.

**Recommendations**

* Directorate should report on MOUs signed after travelling

**3.3 Travel Logistics**

3.3.1 Special requests become a big challenge in IR as they may have financial implications.

3.3.2 Some special requests coming from the Ministry were against the DIRCO policy.

***Acting COO’s response:***

3.3.3 IR should develop a travel policy, not just a circular, to be signed by Minister. The policy should contain travel guidelines.

3.3.4 IR replied that the policy forms part of the 2018/2019 plan and that the guideline document is to be concluded end of the financial year.

3.3.5 IR should have a session with different sections regarding fluctuations, variations and deviations in order to alleviate risks associated with of special requests.

**Recommendations**

* IR should develop a travel policy that contain travel guidelines, instead of sending a circular. Minister should sign the policy.
* IR should convene a session with various sections to educate them about risks associated with special requests.

**4. ACHIEVEMENTS:**

The following achievements of the IR Unit were noted:

4.1 Guidelines for international travel have been completed.

4.2 IR forms part of the travel submission route.

**5. MORE CHALLENGES**

5.1 IR barely receive travel reports from various branches.

**6. WAY FORWARD**

6.1 IR should develop an annual calendar of events and activities and submit this IR plan to the ACOO.

6.3 DoT has more escort delegation when travelling and the Department should be reminded though policy to maximize number of travellers for cost containment reasons.

**7. CLOSURE**

7.1 Acting COO’s office is always open for consultancy

7.2 IR should create an enabling environment and a workspace that is flexible and acceptable as long as the unit delivers on its mandate.

7.3 The Acting COO thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 12:30