

**COUNTRY PAPER FOR THE  
9<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN CONFERENCE ON CIVIL SERVICE MATTERS  
SINGAPORE, 1997**

**TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS  
IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S CIVIL SERVICE**

**Executive Summary**

The independence of Brunei Darussalam in 1984 had a considerable impact on its administrative development. The most notable was the structural change in the system of Government to a new style of Cabinet System.

In view of the new system, earlier efforts were geared towards strengthening the coordination among ministries. Also evident are moves to reinvigorate the Civil Service to make it more effective and efficient in carrying out its functions, roles and responsibilities.

The Government, in addressing the needs of the developments programmes and recognising the challenges arising from the globalised economy and the development of information technology, was committed to bring about a paradigm shift in the system of management and work culture in the Civil Service. Emphasis was given towards improving performance of the Civil Service so as to adequately cater for both the public and the private sector's demands. Hence, some form of administrative reform is inevitable to bring about a desired change in the Civil Service.

The year 1990 is considered as significant as His Majesty's Government introduced a number of reform programmes; implementation mechanisms and an on-going of change across several areas. Some significant developments and trends have emerged from the initiatives undertaken within the framework of the Civil Service Review, notably in the following areas:

- Human Resource Development;
- Customer-care .
- "Professional Arrangements".

The area on human resource development emphasises more on developing a real need of skilled, disciplined, well-educated, motivated and versatile civil servants. Development towards developing the professionalism, attitude, knowledge and skill among civil servants has been given high priority. Various educational facilities and training programmes especially in management, professional and technical fields are actively pursued. National Committee on Human Resource Development (NCHRD) was set up to oversee and plan for the future manpower needs of Brunei DaruSsslam.

Several other measures were undertaken such as the revamping of core services in the civil Service namely, the Brunei Administrative Service (BAS), to enhance the quality of future leadership. Efforts to assimilate positive core values among the civil servants are stepped up as they are imperative in the implementation of any administrative reform programmes.

The second area is on customer-care. In this regard, various efforts had been undertaken. The launching of a nation-wide "Courtesy Campaign" in 1990 was to

bring about fundamental shifts in the attitude and behaviour of the civil servants. Other measures include efforts to enhance the level of comfort and basic facilities; written pledge to the customers which takes the form of "Tekad Pemedulian orang Ramai (TPOR)"; and proactive approach by introducing mechanisms such as Customer Service Unit, hotlines to gather feedback as well as disseminate information to the customers. These customer-oriented services are to cater for the public demands as well as the needs of the country in promoting industries and tourism which among other measures call for foreign investments in Brunei Darussalam.

The third area on "Professional Arrangements" includes in the form of tools of modern management such as strategies, structure, systems and procedures. The trends and developments highlighted by the respective component are as follows:

- The strategy such as the economic diversification is supported by various measures to encourage the economic development in the country. It is, therefore, important to maintain and sustain the Civil Service Reform programmes by instituting several mechanisms such as the establishment of a Civil Service Review Committee; and the introduction of Civil Service Excellence Awards (ACPA). A Civil Service vision entitled "Civil Service Towards The 21st. Century" was also introduced to develop further strategies in revitalising the Civil Service as part of a broader reform agenda to face current and future challenges.
- Reorganisation or restructuring features predominantly in the Civil Service reform agenda not only to allow for the optimal use of resources, but also for greater adaptability to the changing environment both internally and externally. There is also a strong tendency towards decentralisation and devolution of responsibilities to enhance greater accountability of the Civil Service.
- Focus on systems and procedures highlights the need of a regular review of current practices and modes of operations. Various measures are introduced such as a wider use of computer system, office automation and the streamlining of systems and procedures. Client oriented approaches are also adopted as exemplified by the introduction of a "Business Centre", and efforts to reduce waiting and processing time in several Government departments.

## **Introduction**

1. The independence of Brunei Darussalam in 1984 had a considerable impact on its administrative development. The most notable was the structural change in the system of Government to a Cabinet Style of Government. The new style of Cabinet System reflected the commitment of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to a meritocratic and efficient administration.

2. Earlier efforts were geared towards strengthening the coordination among ministries to ensure the smooth running of the government machinery. Also evident are moves to reinvigorate the Civil Service. An effective administrative machinery is vital for the Civil Service to continue to play, amongst others, the planning and implementation of development programmes, the management of the economy and the efficient delivery of services to the public. In pursuit of the development programmes, the Civil Service is challenged by the need to generate more revenue, create more job opportunities, and increase productivity to fulfill

public expectation. The emergence of these factors, and not forgetting the challenges arising from the globalised economy and the tremendous development of information technology call for capable, well-equipped and more responsive civil service. Hence, some form of administrative reform is needed to bring about the desired change in the Civil Service.

3. Various administrative improvements in the Civil Service incidentally took place to coincide with the beginning of the previous Sixth National Development Plan. The year 1990 was considered as a significant turning point in that the Government introduced a number of reform programmes; implementation mechanisms and an on-going programme of change across several areas. These initiatives signify the commitment of His Majesty's Government to bring about a paradigm shift in the system of management and work culture towards creating a more accountable, capable, well-equipped, transparent, dynamic, responsive, effective and efficient Civil Service.

4. The reform programmes which have been put in place are intended to achieve the following goals:

- To inculcate a Civil Service culture based on the tradition and principle of Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB);
- To enhance the efficiency, innovation, responsiveness and accountability in the administrative and management entity;
- To upgrade the skill and competency of human resources in the execution of their duties and responsibilities; and
- To enhance the quality of service delivery towards customer satisfaction.

5. The continuous improvement programmes are instituted by adopting the following approaches: Improvement programmes that involve the use of new ideas and concepts in organisational management; and Improvement programmes that involve modifications to current practices so that they are in line with the organisation's environment.

6. The main thrust of the improvement programmes, as further emphasised by the Seventh National Development Plan, includes several strategic directions such as human resource development, inculcation of core values, reorganisation and streamlining of processes and functions and appropriate utilisation of technologies.

### **Significant Trends and Developments**

7. The turbulent international environment emanating from the process of globalisation and the rapid advancement of Information Technology (IT) has created a borderless world characterised by intense competition. Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service, in realising and keeping up with such enormous and competitive challenges, thus requires constant review of its functions and modes of operation.

8. Essentially, the introduction of a service-wide programme such as the Civil Service Review (CSR) in 1990 is used to spearhead continuous administrative and management improvements throughout the Civil Service. More conventionally, the aim of CSR is to improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality of management of the Civil Service and through this to utilise available resources more efficiently and effectively to deliver better quality of government services.

9. The introduction of CSR is a clear indication that enhancement of quality and productivity remains to be the main agenda for the Civil Service. To this end, various efforts have been undertaken to encourage innovations and administrative changes to ensure greater performance of the Civil Service. In response, the Ministries and Departments embarked on several initiatives such as the formation of the quality control circles, management by objectives, and other initiatives as an effective tool for identifying administrative improvement measures at the process level.

10. In the process of upgrading administrative efficiency and effectiveness, there emerged significant trends and developments notably in the following areas:

- i. Human Resource Development;
- ii. Customer-care; and
- iii. "Professional arrangements";

### **Human Resource Development (HRD)**

11. Recognising the fact that human resources are one of the important assets determining the effectiveness and efficiency of any good governance, this requires efforts and resources to be sufficiently and appropriately channeled towards its development.

12. For Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service, it is evident that the development of human resources is very much in the national agenda as it continues to be the main thrust of the Seventh National Development Plan (1996-2000). There is therefore, a real need to recognise the importance of skilled, disciplined, well-educated, motivated and versatile civil servants, who can adapt quickly to a changing environment. As such, development of its human resources, especially towards developing its professionalism, attitude, knowledge and skill, has been given high priority.

13. In cognisance of those needs, modernised and upgraded education and training systems will continue to be made more responsive to the requirements of dynamic, technically competent and enterprising civil servants. Hence, provision of better educational facilities and training programmes for the Civil Service, especially in management, professional and technical fields are being actively pursued.

14. Towards this end, the Civil Service institute (CSI) of the Public Service Department, in co-operation with various ministries had undertaken and will continue to formulate comprehensive training programmes for the development of skills and the knowledge of civil servants. Apart from CSI, various ministries have also introduced in-house programmes and courses which are intended to improve the quality, performance and productivity of their staff.

15. In enhancing quality of future leadership, Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service has developed further its core services, namely the Brunei Administrative Service (BAS) whereby its scheme of service was recently revamped so as to enhance the professionalism of the officers concerned. A more comprehensive scheme of service has been designed to include management training programmes to cater for both short and long-term planning.

16. The need for optimum utilisation of manpower in both the public and private sectors has led to the formation of the National Committee on Human

Resource Development (NCHRD). This NCHRD Committee is to oversee and plan for the future manpower needs of Brunei Darussalam. Among other functions, this committee is responsible for reviewing the present policies pertaining to HRD in both the public and private sectors.

17. The implementation of administrative reforms should move hand in hand with efforts to inculcate the positive attitudes and progressive values among members of the Civil Service. Such move is essential towards creating a culture of excellence, as well as building a Civil Service that is cohesively welded together by shared values rather than bound to conformity by regulation and the standardization of terms and conditions.

18. To this end, a book entitled, "Moral pillars and work ethics of the Public Service of Brunei Darussalam" was launched in October, 1996 in conjunction with the most notable event for the Civil Service - the Civil Service Day. The Civil Service Day itself provides the much needed room or platform for new initiatives leading to the inculcation of the required values and norms among the civil servants.

19. Eleven values have been suggested as an ideal set of core values which are to be upheld by the civil servants in performing their duties and responsibilities. The values are as follows:

- Clean; honest and trustworthy;
- Efficient, expeditious and accurate;
- Meticulous and valuing time;
- Knowledgeable, creative and innovative
- Commitment, openness and accountability;
- Tolerance, perseverance and courteous;
- Productive and competitive;
- Exemplary;
- Solidarity, consultation and participatory;

### **Austere and Caring**

20. The eleven components of work ethics above are considered as the essential ingredients for the Civil Service of Brunei Darussalam in becoming an organisation that is effective, professional, efficient and trustworthy, which His Majesty's Government aspires to. Essentially, every civil servant is obliged to observe and practise those values so as to bring about the right mind-set that focuses on teamwork; and harmonious relationships which invariably enhance the quality of services rendered to the public.

21. Dissemination of work ethics and values is done through various means such as, seminar, training and "roadshow" Ministries and Departments. The civil servants, in general, developed a greater understanding and awareness of the values and ethics that are expected of them.

### **Customer-Care**

22. In today's global and competitive marketplace, no organisation can survive without satisfying customers' needs and expectations. In this regard, the capability of the Civil Service agencies to produce high quality and efficient service to the general public and customers continues to be an area of concern.

Hence, the provision of customer-oriented services by government departments continue to be the main thrust of reform efforts in the Civil Service.

23. Under such circumstances, meeting customers' needs has become the focal point of all Civil Service operations - a clear departure from a rule-bound bureaucratic tradition. As such, there is a conscious move or effort to understand the needs of customers and to continuously upgrade service standards towards not only meeting customer expectations, but also in exceeding those expectations. In other words, there is an obligation to strive towards delighting the customers.

24. A critical feature in change is the need for fundamental shifts in the attitude and behaviour of civil servants. In this regard, earlier effort towards providing customer-care service can be associated with the launching of a nationwide "Courtesy Campaign" in 1990. The campaign has been projected as important as Brunei Darussalam is in the midst of promoting industries and tourism which among other measures call for foreign investments in Brunei Darussalam. It is focused on the public and private sectors such as schools, banks, hotels, government departments and the general public.

25. The trend towards customer-care also can be discerned in the improvements that have been achieved such as: enhancing the level of comfort and basic facilities provided to the customers as exemplified by, among others, the Ministry of Health through their Outpatient Section; and the Post Office Department with their effort in increasing the number of stamp sale outlets in several areas which are accessible to customers.

26. Further initiative undertaken to provide customer-oriented service takes the form of "Tekad Pemedulian Orang Ramar" (TPOR), which is essentially a written pledge to the customers. It is intended to provide services that are more transparent to the customers, thus ensuring Government agencies to be more sensitive to and responsive in meeting customers' needs and expectations. TPOR is important as Brunei Darussalam is embarking on its vision to develop the country to become a Service Hub for Trade and Tourism (SHuTT) by the year 2003.

27. To this end, several Government Ministries and Departments have shown a great deal of commitment in introducing their respective TPOR such as, the Prime Minister's Office; the Public Service Department; the Management Services Department; the Immigration and Registration Department; the Telecommunication Department and so on. To assist ministries and departments in their effort, guidelines on TPOR were issued and seminar was conducted by the Management Services Department.

28. As more government departments become more sensitive to their customers, some adopted a proactive approach by introducing mechanisms such as Customer Service Unit, Hotlines to gather feedback as well as disseminate information to the customers.

### **Professional Arrangements**

29. From the above scenario, it is clear that efficiency and effectiveness of the Civil Service in response to a wide-range of public needs and demands is a major on-going concern for the Government of Brunei Darussalam. Under these circumstances, it is imperative that the Civil Service be more responsive and ' adaptive in meeting administrative challenges.

30. In the process of evolving a more quality oriented, efficient, responsive and disciplined Civil Service, special attention has been given with regard to the "professional arrangements". Some level of effectiveness and improvements have been noticed in the "professional arrangements" that had been undertaken notably on the following components.

### **Strategy**

31. To enhance activity in economic diversification, various incentives and means to encourage development of economic activities in the country were introduced. This included the opening of light industrial areas; free taxes; joint-ventures and so forth. Various processes and procedures required in setting up businesses in this country were streamlined and made conducive for local and foreign companies to grow. In doing so, the Government hoped for more creation of employment; increased production and economy diversity and that would gradually reduce the reliance on the present main source of the country's economy - oil and gas.

32. To formalise and ensure on-going implementation of reform activities, the Civil Service Review Committee was established with its membership comprising senior level administrators. Its roles and responsibilities are to hold the Civil Service accountable in operating the CSR programme in Government Ministries and Departments. Apart from that, the recent formation of Public Relations Committee were intended to improve the quality of the Civil Service by giving the utmost importance on providing good services to the community and its response to public grievances and complains.

33. Deliberate efforts are also attempted to provide an environment conducive for creative solutions. As such, a significant number of agencies has been successful in effectively introducing quality improvement programmes within their Ministries/Departments, especially with the formation of Action Teams, Quality Control Circles and various committees which are geared towards more productive initiatives for better administration and management of the Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service.

34. The government has and will continue to encourage its agencies to introduce new ideas and innovations to ensure the greater performance of the Civil Service. In fostering a culture of innovation, the "Civil Service Excellence Award" (ACPAI was introduced in 1993. Thus, innovations that can bring about improvements made by individuals or groups to the Civil Service such as, reduction in costs, time savings, increases in output and greater customer satisfaction are recognised and rewarded through the ACPA. In essence, this form of public recognition is in appreciation of civil servants who have made a major and significant contribution in enhancing departmental performance and productivity in the Civil Service. The response from the government agencies has been overwhelming as it is one of the main events during the Civil Service Day.

35. A mechanism of showcasing successfully implemented CSR projects was also established and proved to be useful ever since. The mechanism acts to promote further the sharing of ideas among organisations and to bring about innovative and creative changes to meet the goals of the CSR programme.

36. The establishment of a clear and well defined vision is essential in providing focus and direction to current programme formulation to meet future challenges. In line with this, Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service has recently

developed a vision called "Civil Service Towards the 21st Century", which essentially focuses on structures, systems and human behaviour. The vision is towards achieving quality and excellence in the Civil Service characterised by efficiency, responsiveness, innovativeness, capability and accountability.

37. To ensure commitment and active participation by all civil servants in realising the vision, a high level Steering Committee was established. The Steering Committee consists of all the Permanent Secretaries, whereby one of their roles is to identify, discuss issues and develop further strategies in revitalising the Civil Service as part of a broader reform agenda to face current and future challenges.

## **Structure**

38. The Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service too has seriously considered delegation of responsibilities as an important means for making it more efficient and effective. Hence, delegation of central agencies routine responsibilities to Ministries and Departments has, to some extent, taken place, thus speeding up the process of decision making and further increasing the accountability of the Civil Service in general, and the Civil Servants in particular including the departmental heads.

39. Such moves can be illustrated through the delegation of responsibilities such as the establishment of Mini Tender Board in each Ministry to consider on tendering items below B\$150,000.00; overseas training for 3 months and below; in-house training for certain levels of officers; and administration of contract services, which are now being handled by the line agencies. This is to allow for a greater flexibility in decision making. Furthermore, it allows the central agencies to focus on the more substantive or policy issues.

40. Reorganisation or restructuring of agencies features predominantly in the Civil Service reform agenda. Not only it allows for the optimal use of resources, but also for greater adaptability to the changing environment both internally and externally. Hence, some key Ministries and Departments are involved in the exercise which led to the revamping of the structure of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources; the Department of Immigration and Registration and Royal Brunei Police Force in recent years.

## **Systems and Procedures**

41. It is realised that systems and procedures are administrative mechanisms which are important for co-ordinating production and delivery processes, as well as activities and actions. Furthermore the public's future demands will be greater and correspondingly services provided need to be improved from time to time. Therefore, a regular review of current operating and administrative systems, procedures and processes has to be made gearing towards improvement and modernisation in order to meet and satisfy the customer's needs and requirements.

42. In this regard, Ministries and Departments are constantly working on their own initiatives to meet the common goals of improving and upgrading services rendered to the customers. Various measures were introduced such as a wider use of computer system, office automation and the streamlining of systems and procedures.



43. Such initiatives include the introduction of the "Business Centre" by the Post Office Department, which not only caters for the sale of postage stamps, but also for the settlement of telephone bills and the renewal of driving licences.

44. In an effort to reduce waiting and processing time, systems and procedures are constantly reviewed and closely monitored, resulting in the desired outcomes in several places like the Hospital's Outpatient and Pharmacy Section which open during off hours; and whilst the Immigration and National Registration Department introducing queuing and numbering systems. In addition, many Government departments, for instance, the Post Office and Land Transport Department, maintain their respective counters outside office hours (during lunch time and public holidays, i.e. Fridays) to cater for the extra demand from the public.

### **Conclusion**

45. The current focus in the Brunei Darussalam Civil Service is on administrative innovation through the strengthening of relationships, enhancing the machinery of the government, and increasing output and quality. The Civil Service Review is used to spearhead continuous and management improvements in the Civil Service. The implementation may be seen incremental, but the efforts and initiatives that had been undertaken in recent years had produced some significant trends and developments in the management and administration of the Civil Service.

46. In Brunei Darussalam, there is also a growing emphasis on serving the public including the private sector. This trend marks the transition from the professional focus to the new paradigm of public administration. The new paradigm of public administration is characterised by a participative and consultative management in the public service. New approaches are inevitable and continuous improvement programmes seek to provide those solutions.