# PUBLIC POLICY MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY: CIVIL SERVICE

# THE CIVIL SERVICE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

# SITUATION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES:

# THE CARIBBEAN PERSPECTIVE

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*WORKING PAPER*

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# 1.    INTRODUCTION

## 1.1.    Background And Scope

This paper presents the preliminary results of the study of Civil Service systems and reforms in the Caribbean.  It seeks to provide a comparative analysis of the on-going reforms as well as review the current state and structure of the Civil Service.  The current paper covers Barbados, the Bahamas, Guyana, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.  Four of these were former British colonies while the other, Suriname, has now become part of the Caribbean community, (CARICOM).

This paper is based in part on responses to questionnaires that have been completed by the countries, as well as my own experience and involvement in Public Service Reform in the Caribbean.  While much has been written on traditional Public Administration issues, there has not been much analytical work on the more contemporary public service efforts in the Caribbean.  This survey and paper should begin to add to this important field and, as part of a wider survey of experiences in Latin American countries, should provide a powerful base for comparative analysis, learning, and dialogue.

This paper is one in a series completed as part of the IDB Regional Policy Dialogue on civil service reform in Latin America and the Caribbean.  The Caribbean countries have similar history being former British colonies.  The legal and constitutional arrangements for the civil service are very similar. This paper parallels a similar work done by Dr. Oscar Oszlak  which focuses mainly on Latin America. (1) It is recognized that the Caribbean's  history and legal and constitutional framework makes the region different in some respects to Latin American countries.

In the first section, the paper will explore some conceptual issues relating to the Civil Service.  The second section examines existing Civil Service systems with a focus on elements of human resource management and structure.  The third section reviews contemporary civil service reform initiatives.  The fourth section explores the emerging issues and future challenges for the regions' civil services.

## 1.2.    CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The Commonwealth Caribbean countries of Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago share the experience of being former British colonies; hence, the core features of the civil service are similar in nature.  The evolution of their civil service and reform attempts also bear a similar trajectory since the 1960's when these countries began to gain independence.

Suriname's history is different. Indeed the current Suriname constitution that came into force in 1987 was introduced in a period marked by transition from military to civilian rule and a civil war. This constitution establishes a system of a mixed presidential/parliamentary approach to government and is characterised by the socialist ideology present at the time of its drafting which therefore enshrines a very important role for the state and indeed seems to assume that the state will be the prime driving force of development. It provides as well provision for extensive social obligations on the part of the state.

The other Caribbean countries are characterised by a number of similarities in their civil service conceptualisations. One of these is professional integrity and neutrality. These countries embrace the concept of a permanent career civil service that will understand the philosophies policies and approaches of the government in office and will provide best quality professional advice to ministers and a commitment to implementation of government policy. It has been suggested though that while conceptually and institutionally neutrality was accepted there may have been other preconditions for its operation on which sufficient attention was not focused. Mills argues for instance that:

> *"British institutional forms of government were transplanted throughout the colonial empire, but there was a time-lag between the stages of constitutional development in individual colonies and in the mother country. In any event, the actual operation of the formal systems in the colonies could not identically mirror the effects of custom, tradition, convention and the informal arrangements which have evolved over centuries in Britain.*
>
> *In the Caribbean these institutions were planted in soil where no strong competing culture of political organisations existed and they appear to have developed deep roots – in some territories over a period of more than 300 years. It is doubtful, however that British influences have in fact permeated all strata of West Indian societies to the extent generally assumed. Indeed, at certain levels the influence is at best superficial, and political and social life is characterized by an inarticulate and apathetic public opinion, apathy and non-participation of the masses, and authoritarian/submissive attitudes reflected in a dependency syndrome. These attitudes, originating perhaps in the heritage of the plantation and colonial society, are not consonant with the attributes of British or Western-style democracy. (2)*

### 1.2.1   POLITICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

The relations between the political and administrative directorate in the region have continued to be a source of concern and an issue which many see as a critical one still to be resolved in the evolution of the region's civil service. The

Trinidad and Tobago constitution attempted to enshrine elements of that relationship in the following way:

> *Where any minister has been assigned responsibility for any department of government, he shall exercise general direction and control over that department; and, subject to such direction and control the  department shall be under the supervision of a permanent secretary whose office shall be a public office.* [3]

This attempt by Trinidad and Tobago to put the roles and relationships in the constitution has not prevented tensions to arise.  In reviewing Caribbean civil service history, the tension between the political and administrative directorate seems to rest on one or a combination of the following conditions: (4)

♦ **Mistrust**

Mistrust could exist in the minds of both the minister and the senior public officer.  From the perspective of the minister this comes very often when new political parties come into government and there is the perception that some senior civil servants appear to have been too close to the past administration.  In the mind of the senior public servant, trust issues emerge at times when governments change or even within the same government when ministers change.   In either case there is need for time and perhaps a focused intervention to help develop appropriate relationships.

♦ **Anxiety**

Anxiety again could engulf both the political and administrative directorate.  The Minister may feel anxious to deliver on promises or pressured by his or her cabinet colleagues or the prime minister for performance.  There is the anxiety that comes from the possibility of removal from office as he or she is there at the prime ministers' pleasure.  The public servant is also anxious to demonstrate capacity and to deliver and is concerned about forging a meaningful and productive relationship with the minister.

♦ **Inadequate Preparation**

Both ministers and permanent secretaries very often come to their task without appropriate preparation.  The region's public services have not yet developed human resource management approaches that ensure that permanent secretaries and other senior managers have acquired the necessary competencies to function.  Similarly ministers come to their tasks without necessarily having had experience or preparation.

♦ **Style Difference**

Since ministers and permanent secretaries often have very different experiences and backgrounds their management and organizational styles may differ markedly.  These differences are very often ground for tension, suspicion, and unproductive relationships.

♦ **Time Perspectives**

It has been said that ministers see themselves as running a hundred meter dash, while senior public servants see themselves in a marathon. The minister has an eye on the next election in five years, with the public servants' perspective being more long term. These differences in time perspectives again provide fertile ground for disagreement and difficulty.

♦ **Unclear Vision and Goals**

Where there has not been a clear agreement on a vision and goal of the ministry or department, one often finds difficulties arising in the political-administrative relationship.

While conceptually there is agreement on civil service neutrality and an acceptance of the permanent professional public service, there have been difficulties in operationalising this system in part based on the difficulties in forging productive relationships between ministers and senior public servants.

## 1.2.2   GOVERNANCE

Another conceptual issue that has been attracting the attention of the region's civil servants and ministers is the issue of governance. In a recent strategy paper, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) defined governance as:

> *"The processes by which power and authority are shared and exercised in society, and influence exerted over policy and decisions concerning human development and well being."* [5]

In focusing on its work in the area of governance, the CDB articulated its objectives to promote *inter alia*: [6]

(a) A modern, effective, and accountable public sector that promotes equity in sharing the benefits of development activities through effective and efficient delivery of public services;

(b) Local, national, and regional institutions with the capacity to meet the needs and challenges of adjusting to globalisation and integrating market oriented public policies with poverty reduction.

(c) Significant participation of poor and vulnerable people in social partnerships national consensus building, local development planning and resource allocation and the functioning of local public services that benefit the poor.

(d) Adequate regulatory frameworks for setting and enforcing sound environmental and social standards.

In pursuing its governance agenda the CDB identifies the following as key issues: (7)

♦ **PUBLIC SECTOR MODERNISATION**

- Improving effectiveness
- Improving accountability
- Transparency
- Human resource development
- Knowledge management

♦ **BUILDING CAPACITY FOR STRATEGIC POLICY MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION**

- Integrated Policy frameworks
- Revenue/expenditure management
- Policy management and co-ordination
- Implementation capacity

♦ **SOCIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PARTICIPATION**

♦ **LAW JUSTICE AND SECURITY**

- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- Judicial systems
- Security
- Corporate governance

Suriname has also been focusing on the issue of governance and acknowledges the link between good governance and economic and social development. A recent report of the Inter-American Development Bank has identified the following as the most critical challenges facing Suriname as it works to improve governance. (8)

- Reducing the regulatory burden on the private sector in order to promote economic growth and reduce to opportunities for corruption.

- Refocusing the executive branch on its core tasks so that it can improve its effectiveness and reduce costs. This involves reducing the number of activities the government is involved in to better match its capabilities.

- Addressing human resource issues in the executive and judicial branches over time.

- Overhauling budgetary organisations and processes.

- Improving the generation and availability of information to enhance transparency and accountability.

- Strengthening checks and balances and the ability of oversight agencies to function.

- Improving the performance of the national assembly.

- Fostering civic education and nation building.

The other Caribbean countries also have some weaknesses and issues in their existing governance systems that would include:

- Over concentration of decision-making in Cabinet.

- Shortage of trained and skilled personnel and weak planning and implementation capacity.

- Seemingly undue political interference in many areas of the state.

- Absence of a partnership approach to development.

- A political system that is extremely adversarial and seems to mitigate against national consensus building.

It is to be noted though that Barbados has been able to pioneer a consensus building mechanism in the region that brings together politicians, private sector/public sector, and the trade unions to develop a social compact and consensus for national development.

A Commonwealth expert group charged with addressing the issue of good governance and the elimination of corruption, identified the following as key reform issues:(9)

- Economic reforms that reduce rent seeking opportunities.

- Fiscal reform.

- Reform of subsidised public lending programmes.

- Reform to improve the management, efficiency and delivery of public services.

- Civil Service reform.

- Legal reform.

- Local government reform.

- Monitoring of privatisation to ensure that the transfer of public assets does not create opportunities for illicit accumulation of wealth.

- Opening up the administrative and political systems to greater public scrutiny through parliamentary inquiries and freedom of information provisions.

- Reforms in funding of political parties.

- Capacity building to enhance the capacity of core economic management institutions.

This report accepted by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in South Africa in 1999, provides another framework for considering civil service reforms in the region.

In pursuing this theme of governance and transparency, the Commonwealth Foundation report "Citizens and Governance: Civil Society in the New Millennium"(10) presents the results of a survey of 10,000 persons on their views on a good society and the roles which different sectors should play. The consensus that emerged from this work has three key features:

- A strong state and a strong civil society.

- A deepened democracy and democratic culture.

- An enlarged role for citizens.

Citizens want and expect efficient and effective performance from their governments. They want public institutions to provide for the essential services that assure the economic and physical security of all citizens.

The Commonwealth Secretariat and the Government of Canada convened a conference in April 1998 that focused on "Governance for the 21$^{st}$ Century". The conference identified a number of trends that included: (11)

- Governance will be reshaped by three great drivers of change – global inter-dependence, the communications/information technology revolution; and the expectation of the public to be involved in the decisions of government.

- Democracy will become more immediate and more direct.

- Leadership – and responsibility and well-informed decision-making by representative government – must remain the means by which societies deal with complex problems.

♦ In developing countries, the fundamental public issues of poverty, education, security and health will continue to dominate the public agenda.

♦ Technology will have profound impacts on governance.

♦ Human resource rejuvenation will continue to be a key to the renewal of the public sector.

The conference suggested that Commonwealth governments might usefully focus their efforts on a number of areas, including:

♦ Acquiring or enhancing legitimacy through more responsive public institutions, policies, and political processes.

♦ Supporting political representatives with the rewards, incentives and other working conditions necessary for them to function well in an information society.

♦ Developing a new public executive that is supportive of the public interest, able to have global as well as local knowledge partners, inclined to be a catalyst for change, and able to engage citizens on policy developments and on other matters that affect them.

♦ Developing new ways of working with institutions in the private and voluntary sectors.

These issues also form a backdrop to civil service reform and management in the Caribbean.

### 1.2.3.   PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONS

As the former British colonies in the Caribbean moved to independence there was the view that one way to ensure the neutrality of civil servants was to establish mechanisms that denied politicians a role in recruitment, promotion, and disciplining of staff.  Service Commissions were therefore established as independent bodies to perform these human resource management functions for the civil service.  Within recent time there has been considerable debate about the continuing relevance and role of these Commissions. Civil service reforms rooted in the new managerialism have questioned whether some of the Commissions' functions ought not to be delegated to Public Service Managers.   This approach would suggest that the future role for the Commission should be more of an Audit body.

The Independence Constitutions of the Caribbean countries created Public Service Commissions as independent and autonomous bodies to govern the appointment, discipline, and removal of nearly all public officers.  In addition, they redefined the nomenclature to describe employees of the state.  Instead of the terms "civil servant," "civil service," or "crown servant" the constitution employed the terms "public officer" and "public service".  Strictly speaking,

therefore, employees of the state/crown should be described as public officers. Notwithstanding this constitutional change most countries continued to apply rules and practices fashioned by the colonial regime. There is now an urgent need for modernising law and administration of the commonwealth public service.(12)

Some of the most frequent criticisms of the Public Services of the region have been directed at the composition, powers and procedure of the Service Commissions established by the various Constitutions. These commissions were created to insulate members of the Public Service from political influence exercised upon them by the government of the day. Many have doubted that this original rationale remains relevant. Nunes contends that Service Commissions are "counter productive anachronism[s] and should be abolished".(13) Where they "are weak, they fail to protect [public officers] from political interference and where they are strong, they undermine the managerial duties of senior [public officers]". Collins has long dismissed Service Commissions as "anomalous constitutional relics".(14) More recently, George Eaton et al,(15) reporting on the Grenada Public Service, declared the concept of an "impartial" commission to be "anachronistic" and inconsistent with "the norms of modern personnel management or of professionalism." They argued that commissioners who are "drawn exclusively from outside the service cannot be fully conversant with personnel practices and subtleties of job requirements within the Public Service."

**On that ground, Eaton et al. recommended that:**

> The prohibition against the appointment of serving public officers to the PSC be removed and that the membership of the Commission be reconstituted to accord membership to at least one but preferably two of the senior Permanent Secretaries on a one-year rotating basis to represent executive management of the civil service…We can find no good reason also why the members of the PSC who are appointed on the advice of the Prime Minister after consultation with the appropriate representative bodies cannot be serving public officers"(16)

The Belizean Constitution has made provision for Permanent Secretaries in the membership of the Public Services Commission. Section 105(1) of the constitution provides as follows:

> There shall be for Belize a Public Service Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and 18 other members who shall include as *ex officio* members the Chief Justice, the Solicitor General, the Permanent Secretary Establishment, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Defence, the Permanent Secretary to the Minister responsible for the Prison service, Commissioner of Police, the

Director of Security and Intelligence Service, and the Commandant of the Belize Defence Force.

The Commissions are entrenched in the constitutions of the countries and amendments have proven to be politically challenging.  It is generally conceded that the operations of the Public Service Commissions are inefficient, insensitive and dilatory and that their procedures are cumbersome.(17)  Some have over-centralised the personnel function. Delays to responding to charges to indiscipline have contributed to the undermining of the morale of the Public Service.  Public Service managers are denied control over employees and this has encouraged them to abdicate their responsibility to maintain discipline in the public service.

Some of the difficulties may indeed be traced to the continuing confusion over the respective roles and functions of the executive and service commissions. The constitutions contemplate that the governance of the public services is a shared responsibility.  In Thomas vs Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago, the privy Counsel confirmed that the Service Commissions are entrusted with the following powers:(18)

(a)   The appointment, discipline, and removal of public officers.
(b)   The enactment of rules to govern their procedure in respect of the exercise of the powers named above.  For example the Commissions may establish procedures for disciplinary procedures and the selection and appointment of recruits to the Public Service.

In turn, it is the constitutional responsibility of the executive and/or Parliament to:

(a)   lay down terms of service for public officers.  Terms of service include:

(i)    Determining the duration of the contract of employment e.g. for a fixed period, ending on attaining retirement age, or after the probationary period.
(ii)   Remuneration and pensions; and
(iii)  The physical and educational qualifications for recruitment into the public service.

(b)   the enactment of a code of conduct to indicate *inter alia* the offences which render public officers liable for disciplinary action by a service commission.

In effect the Service Commissions are not employers of public officers.

In a report to CARICAD, "The Role of the Public Service Commission in the management of Human Resources," Sir Carlyle Burton and Associates advocated the strengthening of Human Resource Management Systems in

the Public Services in the Commonwealth Caribbean.  Sir Carlyle advised that the following issues need to be addressed:(19)

> The development of appropriate Human Resource policy statement

> Review of existing rules and regulations.

> The development of human resources information systems

> The development of appropriate performance appraisal systems

> Strengthening the training and development functions and the provision of more management training for middle and senior level mangers.

> Development of a core of personnel technician to work in line ministries

## 1.2.4.  KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

Civil Services in the region have also focused on the importance of knowledge management, and the applicability of the concept of the learning organization to the civil service.  This learning organisation concept has already been embraced by other public services.  In the fifth annual report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada, Joycelyne Bourgon, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to Cabinet envisages the Canadian Public Service as a boundary-less learning organisation. (20)

The challenge of becoming a learning organisation goes beyond the provision of training and development.  A learning organisation for the Canadian public service:

❑ Recognises that it is not perfect – it will make mistakes, but it is able through self-correcting measures to avoid repeating them.

❑ Is able to generate new ideas and to acquire new and useful ideas generated elsewhere.

❑ Disseminates knowledge and insight to multiply and expand their potential applications.

❑ Modifies its behaviour to reflect new knowledge and insight.

The concept of boundarylessness, has its echoes in the United Kingdom concept of 'joined-up government'. In both cases the civil services are exploring approaches for better policy and service delivery coordination across traditional ministry boundaries.  These conceptual issues are also relevant in the Caribbean civil service.

Contemporary civil service management is also increasingly concerned about citizens' satisfaction, and citizen centred approaches to organization and management. With increasing demand from citizens for quality service delivery, the region's public services are being challenged to re-engineer and rethink processes. The learning organization facilitates this development.

## 2.0  CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEMS IN THE CARIBBEAN

This section outlines some salient characteristics of the Civil Service in the Caribbean.  It is based on responses to questionnaires completed by countries (with the exception of Jamaica).  The survey sought to collect data to facilitate a review of the current situation of civil service systems in the Caribbean.  There were many gaps in the returned questionnaires which underscores the urgent need for the development of human resource information systems in Caribbean public services.

### 2.1  Size And Demographics Of The Civil Services.

Table 1 below shows the relationship between size of the civil service and total labour force and population

**Table 1: Central Government employment as a proportion of total Labour Force and total population.**

| Country | % Labour Force | %  Total Population |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Bahamas | 10.7 | 5.6 |
| Barbados | 18.6 | 9.4 |
| Guyana | 3.4 | 4.2 |
| Jamaica | 8.8 | 3.9 |
| Suriname | 44.7 | 7.9 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | 20.1 | 8.0 |

**Table 2 below shows the distribution of the Civil Service by gender.**

| Country | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| Bahamas | 45 | 55 |
| Barbados | 44 | 56 |
| Guyana | 39 | 61 |
| Suriname | 48 | 52 |
| Trinidad and Tobago | n/a | n/a |
|  |  |  |

The trend is clearly towards a slightly higher percentage of females employed in the Civil Service.

Thirty-two percent of Barbados public servants have been employed in the service for over 20 years.  The trends suggest that the average length of service in the public service is well over ten years.  In Trinidad and Tobago the average length of service is over 20 years.

The questionnaires point to mixed experience with respect to reduction in the number of civil servants over the last 10 years.  Bahamas reports a reduction

of less than 5%; Suriname a reduction of 5% – 10%, while Barbados reports an increase in civil service numbers.

## 2.2   Current Legal Framework

Bahamas, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago use a single base legal system, or all-inclusive system for personnel in a single jurisdiction.  This system includes rules on rights, duties and career paths.  Guyana relies on labour laws that govern aspects of personnel administration.  Suriname uses a variety of systems based on the quest for the most suitable working conditions for different groups, in which technical criteria are subordinated to ad hoc considerations.

All the countries report a labour relations framework that include regulations in place, with provisions for improvements through agreements between the administration and unions.

Countries were asked to respond to the following question:

> *To what extent does the public service employment system in your country coincide with the general labour system regulating private employment?*

They all responded that they are similar in some respects, but differ considerably in others.  In commenting on this, the Bahamas noted that they all have to follow the Fair Labour Standards Act and Industrial Relations Act but can offer what salaries and terms and conditions of service they wish.  This approach seems to characterise countries in the region.

Countries reported no legislation that limits the number or percentage of political appointees out of the total staff of each entity.

## 2.3      Human Resource Management

## 2.3.1    Recruitment, Hiring And Duration Of Employment

Countries were asked to respond to the following:

> *The decision to hire a new employee and important subsequent decisions regarding assignments, promotions and evaluations are made by the following, regardless of which legal system applies:*

- The director of the unit or division
- The head of the institution or agency
- A body with cross-organizational responsibility

Bahamas, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago identifies this as a body with cross organisation responsibility.  In the case of Barbados, it is the Personnel

Administration Division. Trinidad and Tobago and Bahamas identifies the Public/Teaching/Police Service Commissions responsible. Guyana cites the head of the institution or agency being responsible, while for Suriname it is the director of the unit or division.

The criteria used for the selection and entry of employees in the public administration may be described in the following ways:

♦ Generalized use of selection procedures based on competition (open or closed), objective and transparent criteria, tests, competent neutral selection panels, and other guarantees to ensure that the best candidates are hired.

♦ Relatively informal procedures are used for employee selection, which include some objective criteria (such as examinations, consideration of the match between the post and the individual).

♦ Employees are selected chiefly for reasons of confidence, with scant regard for the merits of the candidates.

♦ A mixed system is used, which includes some situations (coverage of key posts, management functions, executive positions etc.) in which competitions are held, with most situations involving direct appointment with no competition.

Bahamas, Barbados, and Guyana report opting for the second variant, the use of relatively informal procedures. Suriname uses the fourth approach which is the mixed system, while Trinidad and Tobago uses the first system, i.e. the generalised use of selection procedures.

Countries report that there are no restrictions of any kind that impede access to the public sector by people belonging to certain minorities or groups.

Probationary periods tend to be six months to one year, although Suriname reports this as three to six months, and Trinidad and Tobago as over one year. In Barbados and Bahamas appointment is influenced by a probationary report. In Guyana and Suriname the employee becomes permanent automatically at the end of the probation period. In Trinidad and Tobago, in some cases an examination is required.

## 2.3.2. Job Security In The Civil Service

There tends to be significant job security in the public service. In most cases there are regulations that allow for dismissal for negative evaluation, corruption and failure to perform duties. They are seldom applied, and the process for their application tends to be long.

Sanctions generally arise for civil servants who take part in disruptive strikes. The indications are that these sanctions are applied.

### 2.3.3. Types Of Labour Relations

In most civil service systems, there is provision for special hiring regimes. This would include daily paid employment, hiring for a limited period as temporary staff, and the use of service and term contracts.

Many of the contracts for limited time periods tend to relate to special projects. In Trinidad and Tobago civil servants may be appointed to projects on contracts while being given leave from their substantive posts. The growth of project related contract employment is occasioned by the increasing use of programme budgets, and the growing role of international agencies in the financing of programmes and projects. The appointment of serving officers to contract posts is usually accompanied by their receipt of higher salaries. This very often adversely affects morale and distorts salary administration.

Most contracts tend to be for three to five years. In some cases renewal of contracts may be granted even after the original justification for the contracts has passed.

### 2.3.4. Promotion Systems

Seniority is generally acknowledged as an important factor in promotion decisions. In Barbados there is legislation that states that qualifications, merit, and seniority should be used. In Suriname, while there is no legislation, in practice priority tends to be given to candidates from the same institution.

The use of performance evaluation as a determinant for promotion varies. In Barbados and Guyana performance evaluation is only marginally considered, while in the Bahamas it is a significant factor. The results of training are generally not a determining factor in promotion decisions.

With the exception of Suriname, promotion decisions very seldom reflect a need to pay employees better. In most cases promotion is contingent on the availability of positions.

### 2.3.5. Horizontal Occupational Mobility

Some level of mobility is possible in all cases. In Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago this mobility tends to be within the same sector. In the Bahamas and Barbados there is mobility across the whole public system. Geographic mobility is possible if required by the organization.

### 2.3.6. Systems Of Performance Evaluation

There seems to be a prevailing view that the performance evaluation systems and tools currently in place are not effective. In most cases the employees' superior is responsible for performing the evaluations.

The main objectives identified for performance evaluation are to make decisions about promotions, and to detect training needs and plan training.

The performance evaluation system in use tends to give employees ratings on the higher end of the scale.

The systems in use therefore do not reflect real differences in performance. Their usefulness for human resource management decision-making is seriously compromised. There is no merit pay system in place.

## 2.3.7. Training And Human Resource Development

The approaches to training seem to fall into one of the following two categories:

➢ Training in response to specific demands. Training programmes and plans, are based on the detection of employee requirements through instruments that are systematically and permanently applied.

➢ Training through a non-specific supply, which is not based on the detection of individual requirements. Any supply generates its demand. Training consists of the indiscriminate offer of courses, generally sporadically, that do not respond to a systematic evaluation of training requirements for different classification levels.

There is no state monopoly for training public employees, although most of the countries have a central training unit or centre. The rules on training do not contain mechanisms to make heads of units or programmes accountable for spending on training and for the results of training activities.

## 2.3.8. Working Conditions

There generally are uniform working hours for the central administration, and variable working hours for public companies, decentralized agencies, etc. The norm is for 7 to 8 hours work per day. Clearly though, the working day is a function of the nature of services provided. Continuous attention is required in places such as hospitals, police stations and fire brigade. Workers in these services work on a shift system, with the number of hours per week determined through collective bargaining.

## 2.4.  Salary Administration

Most of the salary systems reflect the principle of equal pay for equal work performed under similar conditions. In Trinidad and Tobago the Public Sector Salary System covers the civil service, Statutory Authorities and Protective Services, and the principle of equal pay for equal work is applied across the services. Recently the teaching Service that was part of the system was de-linked and now focuses on equal pay for equal work within that service only.

A system that contrasts the internal importance of the different types of posts but does not compare them to salaries in the external labour sector tends to be the approach to assessing the value of work. In Trinidad and Tobago the

methodology used in the Civil Service is the Position Classification Method. The Guide Chart Method, a quantitative type system, was recently introduced in the Teaching service. In the former method no reference is made to salary studies in the external labour sectors. In the latter method this was done.

Salary scales in the civil service tend to be relatively comparable to the private sector at the lower levels. Salary scales at the middle and senior management levels are not competitive with the private sector.

The mechanism used for the purpose of preparing the payroll and the payment of salaries can adopt some of the following forms:

♦ An organizational unit (e.g. Computer Centre) reporting to a Ministry of Planning, of Economy, of the Civil Service or similar functions, has the responsibility of preparing the lists and processing the salaries of all public employees.

♦ A unit similar to the previous one has the responsibility of processing the salaries of a considerable part of the payroll; other institutions such as decentralized agencies, public enterprises or even organizations of the Central Administration (such as Education) have their own systems for this task.

♦ Practically every institution has its own payroll system and processes the salaries.

In the Caribbean the first two of these forms tend to be used.

## 3.0. REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY REFORM INITIATIVES

### 3.1. Overview Of Reform Agendas

Caribbean countries, like many others worldwide, have been responding to pressures for public service reform. The Barbados White Paper on Public Sector Reform provides a good representation of these pressures. This White Paper identified pressures to undertake reform as originating from many sources during the 1980s and the 1990s:(21)

- ➢ Unbearable fiscal deficits

- ➢ External economic factors, specifically the pressures of global economic liberalisation and the need for encouraging growth and productivity in the private sector.

- ➢ Unfavourable trade conditions heightened by global trade groupings

- ➢ Debt burdens and high interest rates

- ➢ The increase in the growth of the state and the need to define the changing roles of government in the political economy.

- ➢ A strong demand by the public for improved public sector performance and productivity

- ➢ Constant demand of citizens of greater accountability by government and more transparency in its operations.

In response to these pressures Caribbean countries, like many others, have been embracing the tenets of New Public Management. The reform agendas have reflected aspects of this new paradigm in public service management. The Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) has identified a number of components of the new Public Management. These components include:(22)

- ◆ Providing high quality services that citizens value.

- ◆ Increasing autonomy for public service managers.

- ◆ Reduction of central agency controls, devolution, and decentralisation.

- ◆ Establishing performance assessment of both organisations and individuals.

- ◆ Improving the development of human and technological resources.

- ◆ Achieving a receptiveness to competition and an open mind about what functions should be performed by the public sector.

♦ Developing partnerships with the private sector and NGOs.

♦ Greater use of contemporary management tools such as Strategic Planning and Value for Money auditing.

♦ The use of Citizens' Charters identifying service standards for public service agencies and mechanisms for complaints by citizens.

A review of civil service reform agendas across the Caribbean reveals a number of features of this new Public Management framework.

**Barbados** is currently implementing a civil service reform programme with the following elements. (23)

1. Refocusing the Public Sector in response to the changing role of Governments to provide opportunities for the private sector, unions, and citizens to collaborate and participate in the systems of government.

2. Creating customer focused government whereby the public sector becomes more sensitive and responsive to the needs of citizens.

3. Reorganising ministries and Departments in keeping with the new focus of being responsive and results and performance oriented.

4. Reviewing the centralised system of decision-making vis-à-vis central ministries and line ministries, as well as within ministries.

5. Enhancing Human Resource Management to ensure that the Public Sector has a suitably trained and qualified work force that can optimise the use of resources and ensure that government operations are carried out in a more effective and efficient manner.

6. Enhancing Financial Management to ensure accountability and discipline in the use of government funds in an effort to bring about intended benefits to the public and the nation.

7. Included in reform interventions are:

   ♦ Strategic Planning for Ministries
   ♦ Organisation Reviews
   ♦ Employee Assistance Programmes
   ♦ New Performance Appraisal System
   ♦ Performance and Programme Budgeting
   ♦ Customer Charters
   ♦ Job Evaluation

One significant feature of the Barbados landscape in recent times has been the implementation of a social partnership arrangement.  This partnership

brings together the Government, employers' representatives, and workers' representatives. These partners have signed a social compact that includes the following major objectives:(24)

    I. Maintenance of the existing parity of the rate of exchange

    II. Maintenance of a stable industrial relations climate

    III. Sustainable expansion of the economy through its competitiveness

    IV. Restructuring of the economy

    V. Reduction of social disparities through increased employment

    VI. National commitment to increase productivity

    VII. Achievement of a balance between prices and incomes

    VIII. Consolidation of the process of tripartite consultation

This partnership has focused on the issue of Public Sector Reform and in its third Protocol states as follows:(25)

"The social partners acknowledge that the Public Service absorbs a significant proportion of government revenue in the provision of services essential to the continued development of Barbados and that its performance therefore has implications for the efficiency and competitiveness of the economy. The social partners support the continued reform of the public service into a modern and efficient organization which promotes innovation and initiative, accelerates the making of decisions and provides working conditions which are conducive to increased productivity, greater job satisfaction and commitment to duty in the best traditions of the public service of Barbados.

**Trinidad and Tobago** has had public service reform on its national policy agenda since independence in 1962.(26) Oil windfalls greatly expanded the size of the public sector in the early 1970's and 1980's but the public sector did not contract with the fall in oil prices. By 1986 – 1990 the Civil service, Public utilities and State owned enterprises accounted for nearly two-thirds of GDP at its peak. In 1987 30% of the total labour force was employed in the public sector and approximately 15% of GDP went to government wages. Since 1990 the adjustment programme has streamlined the public sector and privatised many activities. By 1994 Government spending was down to 27% of GDP from 42% in the early 1980's and public sector employment had declined to 22% of the total labour force.

The 1991-1995 government of Trinidad and Tobago in pursuing the public service reform agenda, articulated a vision of the public service as one that:(27)

- ❏ Is client driven
- ❏ Produces prompt results
- ❏ Is highly motivated and business like
- ❏ Has a high speed processing capacity
- ❏ Is results oriented
- ❏ Promotes and expects high standards of performance
- ❏ Has high profile leadership
- ❏ Provides for the growth and development of its members

Much of the reform work focused on human resource management reforms and included the following:

- ➢ The articulation of a human resource philosophy and framework of the public service of Trinidad and Tobago.

- ➢ The development of human resource departments in line ministries

- ➢ The development of a new performance appraisal system

- ➢ Job evaluation and job reclassification

In addition, ministries and departments began developing strategic plans with the intention of using these for resource allocation and accountability. There was also staff reduction in the daily paid cadre as well as further privatisation of state owned enterprises. The preparation for privatisation in some cases was accompanied by reduction in the work force particularly in the public utilities such as Water, Transport, and the Port Authority.

In a 1997 White Paper on a policy agenda for the New Public Administration, the government of Trinidad and Tobago outlined the following elements for the reform process:(28)

- o Continuous improvement and management/quality programmes
- o Operational Efficiency Audits
- o Human resource Management/Human Resource Development
- o Focus on the Structure of the Public Service
- o Focus on the size and scope of the Public Service
- o Internal and External Service Excellence
- o Focus on Financial Management and Procurement/Supply Management
- o Information Technology
- o Labour and Industrial Relations
- o Information and Communications

Some specific interventions include:

- o Strategic Planning for Ministries
- o Decentralising Human Resource Management

- o New Performance Appraisal System
- o Job evaluation
- o Institutional Strengthening of Customs and Inland Revenue departments
- o Computerizing elements of the Justice system

**Jamaica** has embraced administrative reform since the mid-1980's when, under a World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme, the first phase of the administrative reform programme was launched. Two basic elements, Performance Budgeting and Decentralisation of authority, defined the approach, which contained three distinct but interrelated components:

1. Human resource management
2. Financial management
3. Line agency restructuring

Following a 1992 study on government structure, there was further restructuring of the Jamaican public service and significant downsizing.(29)

Jamaica is currently pursuing a Public Service Modernization project that includes:

- o Privatisation of some public service entities.

- o Contracting out those services that can be delivered more efficiently and effectively by the private sector.

- o Strengthening and right-sizing the workforce.

- o Abolishing redundant statutory bodies.

- o Strengthening the civil service core and retraining statutory bodies.

- o Strengthening procurement procedures.

There has also been the creation of Executive Agencies. Selective government organisations have been accorded executive agency status. The intent of this status is to give agency CEO's full autonomy over the management of their agencies financial and human resources. These CEO's are also expected to establish performance targets and sign performance contracts.

The modernisation project visions the creation of an appropriately staffed, efficient, effective, and accountable public sector that delivers high quality service to the people.

The current work in Jamaica also focuses on strengthening transparency, accountability, and good corporate governance in public bodies.

**Guyana** has also been actively involved in Public Service reform efforts, and has acknowledged that very few public sector reforms have taken hold due to social, political, and economic considerations, and because the reforms rely on scarce human capacity or on inter-Ministerial or inter-agency decision-making, co-ordination, or approval. Public Sector reform has been identified as one of the most urgent and important areas of outstanding structural reform.

During the 1970's and 1980's the Guyana public sector greatly extended its involvement in the economy. The Government assumed responsibilities not only for basic infrastructure and social services, but also for nearly 90% of productive activities in the formal sector. Since then, low real and relative pay, attrition, and privatisation efforts have significantly reduced the size of the public sector.

The period of public sector expansion in Guyana had resulted in unwieldy and dysfunctional structures resulting in the following:

➢ Deterioration of the quality of public services

➢ Deterioration of the quality and composition of public employment, particularly at the management and technical levels, due to the failure to provide adequate compensation and performance incentives.

➢ Over-extension, weak financial management, lack of effective control with over-centralisation of decision-making, and high cost of a large public sector in a small economy.

➢ Overlapping/contradicting jurisdiction and functional responsibility.

In 1999 an Arbitration Tribunal set up by the Government of Guyana, as a pre-condition for settling a two-month strike, awarded a substantial pay award. The Tribunal's Judgement report emphasised the importance for the future of a pay policy to avoid further confrontational negotiations and stressed the need to start the reform process at once. The Tribunal stressed the need to bring the unions into the reform process and to begin implementing team building in Ministries and departments.

The Government of Guyana has now designed a Public Service Reform project with the following key components:

➢ Building Government of Guyana capacity and stakeholder consensus for public sector reform. This will include institutional capacity.

➢ Improving baseline data.

➢ Improving service delivery and efficiency through an overview of the public service function and institutional capacity assessments.

In 1995 a Caricom Ministerial Working Group on public service reform reported to Caribbean Heads of Government and outlined the following priority areas for public service reform focus:(30)

- ➢ Redefining the role of the state.

- ➢ Service orientation

- ➢ Human Resource development

- ➢ Information Technology

- ➢ Process of change Management.

That Report noted that the challenges for improved management of the public sector cannot be adequately addressed without a clear vision and clearly defined purpose of what must be the essential features of the state, its organs, its scope, and function in serving the interest of the great majority.  These features derive from a fundamental understanding of the state as an instrument by which democracy, equity, and the satisfaction of material needs are realised for all human beings without prejudice and detriment to future generations.

The Report then identified the following key elements(31)

1. The primacy of a clearly articulated vision that captures the purpose, goal, and significance of the changes that will be pursued;

2. The communication of benefits that can or have been derived from reform efforts;

3. The fundamental importance that reform be understood as a process that is internally driven and not primarily imposed by external forces and agencies.

4. The process of reform must be informed by content and substantive issues which are recognized needs of the actors and stakeholders;

5. As much as political will and support of the highest level of the political directorate is a prerequisite to success, administrative will across all levels of the public service is equally important;

6. Delegation of authority, whereby participatory management and a terms approach to the discharge of responsibilities to accomplish stated goals and outcomes must be a guiding principle for improved organizational performance;

7. Milestones and achievements are to be recognised publicly as a means to facilitate the cumulative impact of distinct activities

The review of the reform programmes in the region shows that there have been activities focused on across the board or horizontal change, and other reforms which were sector specific or vertical. There has generally been no systematic attempt to evaluate the results of the reform. The next section provides an overview of some of the major lessons learned from these initiatives.

## 3.2   Lessons Learned from Reform Initiatives

We need to take the lessons learned from these recent civil service reform initiatives into the future. This section presents an overview of the significant lessons from the recent reform initiatives.

> ### Strategic Visioning

While many of the reforms have focused on the development of strategic plans, these have not generally been developed against the background of a strategic vision. There is the need now for the development of strategic policy groups and scenario planning to improve civil service capacity to look ahead and prioritise change initiatives. Most of the strategic planning is not "strategic." It tends to focus more on analysis, extrapolation, and incrementalism than about creative thinking and exploring new possibilities. The need for more strategic visioning must be a lesson that we draw from recent reform initiatives.

> ### Political Commitment and Leadership are Essential

Strong and visible political support for reform is critical for success. The political commitment must come not only from politicians in government, but also from politicians in opposition. The political opposition commitment is important given the need for continuity in reform initiatives. Too often when opposition parties come into government, they spend too long before committing to necessary reforms started by the past government, hence losing momentum in the process.

One feature of many Caribbean governments now is the assignment of a Minister with responsibility for Public Administration or the public service. This Minister has very often been given responsibility for civil service reform. It is then mistakenly believed that this Minister alone must drive reform. Where other Ministers do not demonstrate commitment and leadership for reform in their Ministries reform initiatives flounder. This is particularly critical for reforms that must cut across all Ministries, such as Human Resource Management reforms.

> ### Commitment and Leadership of Senior Public Service Managers

The capacity to lead change is recognised as one of the critical competencies of senior executives. Leadership in the civil service is

essential for achieving the vision and objectives of reform. Visible and demonstrated commitment of civil service leadership is necessary for reforms to succeed.

Civil service leadership must be able to communicate vision, develop coherent strategies, energise and co-ordinate change efforts, and create a learning, enabling and empowering environment.

### ➢ Clarify Reform Objectives

It is important to be clear about what the reforms are expected to achieve. One element of this is also clarity about the timing of reforms, and the pace of change – both of which must be realistic.

### ➢ Need to Embrace and Utilise Large Scale Change Methodology

Civil service reform is about large system change. There is the need therefore to embrace appropriate change methodology. This also means that a core of trained change professionals must be available.

### ➢ Co-ordinating and Servicing of Reforms

Comprehensive and large system change requires careful sequencing and co-ordination of the various changes. Much of the recent reforms still appear to be piece-meal and uncoordinated. This minimizes the impact of the reforms and denies the synergies that are possible. There are very real linkages that need to be made between strategic planning, budget reforms, performance management, and human resource management. Very often reforms in these areas proceed in parallel, with minimum co-ordination.

### ➢ Stakeholder Involvement

Relationships with key stakeholders must be developed to create supportive alliances. This would include involvement of trade unions, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

### ➢ Communication and Information Sharing

A comprehensive communication programme must be developed and maintained. This programme must utilise a full range of media and be targeted at both internal and external stakeholders.

### ➢ Identify, Honour, and Work with Resistance

Resistance is inevitable in a change process. Resistance could be seen as feedback, which could cause reformers to focus on some important but neglected areas. The resistance may highlight threats being felt by individuals in the system, at times feelings of inadequacy given the demands of the new organization. The proposed reforms may raise anxieties about the ability to perform, future job security and working

relationships. It is important to identify the cause of resistance and work with it.

## ➢ Evaluate Reforms and Report Progress

Reform initiatives need to be periodically assessed to determine whether objectives are being met and whether the changes are being implemented in the most appropriate manner. These reviews must form part of the information shared with internal and external stakeholders.

## ➢ Make It Home Grown

There is very often the temptation to copy reforms and systems from other countries. This is dangerous. The aim should be to understand and adopt appropriate principles, but allow the details of the reform to be developed through stakeholder involvement in the country.

# 4. EMERGING ISSUES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

The Civil service in the region continues to be faced with many challenges. The environmental forces which impelled reformed over the last decade continue to be present. These forces include:

- ❑ Globalisation

- ❑ Information and Communication Technology

- ❑ Citizens' demands for service quality

- ❑ Push from International Financial institutions

- ❑ Fiscal pressures

- ❑ Investor demands for public administration efficiency and effectiveness.

- ❑ Civil society's demands for involvement.

These environmental forces and the lessons learned from past reform attempts inform the following outline agenda of issues and challenges.

## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING TO MANAGE AND COORDINATE REFORMS

The region needs to focus attention on the most appropriate institutional mechanism to manage and coordinate reform efforts. This institution must be located at a place in the public service that will facilitate creditability, and be seen to have access to the country's leadership. The Office of the Prime Minister has been seen to be one such appropriate place.

In addition to location, however, this organisation must have the appropriate skill mix. Leadership of this unit is critical. In addition, it must be staffed by persons with change management competencies.

One of the lessons learned is the importance of having clearly delineated focal points for change and the skill and competencies to manage large system change. This, therefore, is an important issue and challenge for the regions civil services.

## STRATEGIC VISIONING / STRATEGIC POLICY MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDIANTION

One of our learnings is the ease with which policy work could become segmented and compartmentalised. One of the challenges in the civil service therefore is to escape from the department or ministry silo-like approach to policy work or implementation. Within the last decade some reform work has focused on strengthening Cabinet Offices with the intention

of facilitating more a corporate type approach to government activity. There is the challenge now to develop mechanisms for more effective policy management and co-ordination.

Underpinning this policy management and co-ordination must be strategic visioning activities. While most of the region has embraced strategic planning, there is limited strategic visioning taking place. There is need now to embrace and utilise visioning methodologies such as scenario planning or future conferencing. Strategic planning and management would then be done against the backdrop of the visioning activity.

## POLITICAL / ADMINISTRATIVE INTERFACE

There is a challenge to provide interventions to help and support politicians and ministers as they too work in an increasingly complex environment. There is also a need to develop mechanisms to facilitate the development of effective relationships between politicians and administrative directorates.

## INTEGRATING AND SEQUENCING REFORMS

One reflection on past reform efforts is the notion that they have suffered because of piecemeal approaches. There is a need to ensure that reform work is effectively co-ordinated and sequenced. There must, for instance, be a clear link from strategic visioning to strategic planning, human resource management reforms, financial management reforms, budget reforms, and ultimately, through to performance measurement and evaluation.

## STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

New organizations require new competencies and new mindsets. Caribbean public services need to fundamentally rethink human resource management systems. The challenges in this area includes the following:

- Re-thinking the role and functioning of Service Commissions.

- Engaging in Strategic Human Resource Planning – linked to strategic plans.

- Implementing systems for identifying, rewarding and promoting high performing staff. This must include mechanisms for fast tracking.

- Focused and strategic human resource development.

- Effective performance appraisal systems.

- Competency based human resource management systems.

- Review of legislation, regulations and policies.

**INTRODUCING A SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE**

There is a need to formally identify and delineate the senior management core of the civil service. Movement into this level must depend on performance and successfully completing a planned development programme.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The issue of leadership is one of the most significant items on the agendas of public and private organisations in both the developed and developing worlds. It is certainly a critical issue for Caribbean Civil Services. Leadership is crucial for achieving change. Civil services need to implement comprehensive approaches to develop the leaders who will transform and then lead the new civil services.

**NEW INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REGIMES**

Many Caribbean civil services have been marked by industrial relations disputes that have had a negative effect on the implementation of reforms. Trade Unions must be an integral part of the planning and implementation of civil service reforms. In many countries much is still left to be done to constructively engage the trade union movement in the reform process.

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

Caribbean civil services must address the issue of organisation performance measurement design or adopt an appropriate model for this purpose. Given increasing concerns about accountability and transparency, comprehensive performance measurement tools must be utilised. These performance measurement instruments recognize the need to measure more than financial accounting performance.

The Futures Group in the United Kingdom has developed a Public Service Excellence Model. This model draws on current comprehensive models such as the US Baldridge Quality Awards, the European Quality / Business Excellence models, the Balanced Scorecard, and the Canadian National Quality initiative. The Public Services Excellence model is designed around three "building blocks" which are identified as: enablers, organisation results, and programme results. This model provides a framework for benchmarking, organization analysis, performance measurement, and business planning.

**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND THE LEARNING ORGANIZATION**

Knowledge management is now recognised as a major challenge for organisations in both the public and private sectors. The Caribbean civil services need to develop the systems, structures, and competencies to create a learning organisation culture.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

Given the issues raised with respect to the functioning of the pubic service commissions the Caribbean countries need to focus on the development of appropriate legislation to manage the human resource function in the public services.   This would include reviewing existing civil services acts and regulations, as well as codes of conduct for public officers.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships and new network arrangements have emerged to be some of the most powerful and important organisational developments over the past decade.   All sectors of society are now recognising the way in which effective partnering could positively impact on policy debate, policy formulation, and service delivery.   Partnering also provides the opportunity for inclusion of many groups who in the past have not had a voice to play a meaningful role in critical activities of the society.   Harnessing the potential of partnerships would require new mindsets and skill sets and would also see the emergence of new and hitherto unimagined organisational forms and relationships.   Caribbean civil services are challenged therefore to embrace the potential of partnering and to develop the competencies that would facilitate managing in this new environment.

## e-GOVERNANCE / e-GOVERNMENT

We have begun to embrace the power of information and communication technology for a range of transactions in society, and we have seen the emergence of e-commerce as a powerful new force in business and marketing.   The civil service in the Caribbean must now develop a vision and system for electronic governance and government which would facilitate the public service, the private sector, and citizens using information technologies not only to improve service delivery, but also as an integral part of citizens participation and empowerment.

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