

African Public Services

Challenges and a Profile for the Future

African Association for
Public Administration
and Management

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VIKAS

The book examines in detail the present and future problems of the African Public Services and suggests ways for meeting some of them. The book identifies and brings out fundamental issues and demonstrates how the critical issues on management of African Public Services might be resolved.

Specific areas covered in the book include administrative reforms and strategies; public enterprises; optimal relationship between Central and Regional/Local Government Public Services; manpower development and management techniques and machinery in Public Services; motivation and fostering commitment and responsibility in Public Services; leadership in Public Services; etc.

A major contribution to the study of *African Public Services*, the book analyses current thoughts, views and ideas on what should constitute the essential and fundamental elements in African development-oriented public service.

African Public Services has a wide relevance and will be of paramount interest not only to students of politics, public administration and management but also public officers, managers and policy-makers.

The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) is an international association formed in 1971 at Freetown, Sierra Leone with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

It has a membership of over 200 top administrators and managers from independent African nations and 15 corporate members from among Institutions and Schools of Public Administration and Management and Public Corporations. Some African nations as also International Foundations interested in the development of public administration and management in Africa support AAPAM with annual grants.

The Association focuses on the African experience in public administration and management and seeks to:

- i) provide a forum for exchanging ideas and experience between administrators, managers, scholars and teachers in this field;
- ii) professionalize public administration and management;
- iii) assist, encourage and contribute to the study;
- iv) foster affiliation and maintain liaison with other international organizations interested in public administration and management.

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of the
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Foreword

An important landmark in the development of African public services was reached at the meeting of the African Association of Public Administration and Management held in Nairobi, Kenya from 7th to 15th August, 1979. Participants from 15 English-speaking countries consisting of Ministers, Heads of Civil Services, Permanent Secretaries in charge of Establishment, General Managers of Public Enterprises, Directors of Institutes of Public Administration and other senior officers in the Public Services met and discussed at great length the type of public service that has developed in Africa over the years, especially since independence, and reviewed its adequacy or otherwise in enabling African Governments and peoples to meet the challenges of the 1980s.

The Nairobi Round-Table was a continuation of the dialogue which AAPAM launched in Freetown—Sierra Leone in August, 1978 on *African Public Services: Prospects for the 1980s*. The purpose of the two Round-Table Conferences was, among other things, to examine in detail the present and future problems of the African Public Services and to suggest ways of meeting some of them. The Sierra Leone Conference decided at the end of its meeting that a series of Round-Tables should be held, the first of which should be in 1979, and that the 1979 Round-Table would discuss a research-based document intended to identify and bring out the fundamental issues of African Public Services as well as demonstrate how the critical issues on management of Public Services might be resolved.

The Association appointed Messrs C.H.M. Barlow, formerly Secretary-General of AAPAM (Chairman), Drs. K.A. Owusu-Ansah, G. Mutahaba and Mr. Charles Wyse as members of the study team, and they were commissioned to carry out a mission in eight African countries, namely, Swaziland, Zambia, Tanzania, the Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Kenya with a view to studying the major problems of Public Administration in these countries, and that the findings of the study team should be the subject of

discussion at the Second Round-Table Conference in Nairobi, Kenya in 1979.

The Nairobi Round-Table Conference, after analysing and discussing the study-report, the country papers and the proceedings of the Sierra Leone Round-Table, decided that the findings as amended by the Nairobi meeting, should be published in a book form and made available to the African Governments and the general public.

The terms of reference for the study team were to:

1. Collect and **analyse** current thoughts, views and ideas on what should constitute the essential and fundamental elements of a truly African, development oriented Public Service whose concern is to serve and develop the African people.
2. Gather and collate the ideas into a coherent and comprehensive document entitled, *A Profile of the African Public Services for the 1980s* for submission to AAPAM secretariat and presentation to the second Round-Table to be held in Nairobi, Kenya about August, 1979.
3. In the same document, identify, discuss and recommended the most *practical* and *realistic* measures necessary for achieving the type or types of Public Services recommended in (1) and (2) above.
4. Without prejudice to other aspects, emphasize, specifically examine and recommend on:
 - (a) the optimal relationship for rapid development between Central and Regional or Local Government Public Services, having regard to the need for the democratization of the development process if Africa is to achieve accelerated development;
 - (b) the optimal relationship for rapid development between the Civil Service and the Public Enterprise Sector;
 - (c) modern manpower management and development techniques and machinery in Public Services;
 - (d) leadership in the Public Services.
 - (e) mechanics, ways and means of motivating and fostering commitment and responsibility in Public Services;
 - (f) mechanics for monitoring efficiency, evaluating performance and ensuring optimal utilization of manpower in Public Services.

In the pages which follow, an attempt has been made to survey the problems, goals and tasks of Independent African States. The newly Independent African States vary considerably in size and population. They also vary in terms of their economic strength, political maturity and resilience, as well as in historical and ethnic backgrounds. However, they all share a variety of characteristics: they are economically under-developed, politically fragile and generally unstable, as well as socio-culturally inhibited. Additionally, there are common factors like their youthfulness as nation-states, the impact of the recent colonizing powers on their total culture and the relative inexperience of the politicians and administrators in the art of Government. Others include the problems of communications, the critical shortage of trained and skilled manpower, high rate of illiteracy among the population, lack of capital and technology necessary for rapid economic development. Consequently, the African countries tend to experience similar types and salience of problems. These problems, goals and tasks and many other issues, are discussed in this book.

This book is in two parts: Part I, in addition to presenting lead papers, attempts to summarize other major papers and discussions at the Round-Table I conference; Part II presents the results of the study commissioned by AAPAM on the Profile of the African Public Services which formed the basis of the Round-Table II Conference.

Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

ADEBAYO ADEDEJI
President of AAPAM

Acknowledgements

The task of compiling this study would have been insuperably difficult without the active co-operation and material assistance of many people and institutions. Let me express the Association's sincere appreciation to the Governments and officials of the countries visited by the study team for their co-operation, without which the task of the team would have been impossible and this book would not have been produced.

The Association also wishes to thank those members of the Association on whose shoulders fell the responsibility of carrying out the study, and for writing various chapters of this book following the Nairobi Round-Table Conference in August, 1979; they are Mr. C.H.M. Barlow (Chairman), formerly Secretary-General of AAPAM, Dr. K.A. Owusu-Ansah, Dr. G. Mutahaba and Mr. Charles Wyse.

For making Dr. K.A. Owusu-Ansah, Dr. G. Mutahaba and Mr. Chalres Wyse available to undertake this assignment, the Association wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the Director of Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, Achimota, the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Manpower Development, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania and the Head of the Civil Service in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Association is also grateful for the material support and co-operation it received from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical co-operation, and the Ford Foundation. Their financial assistance made it possible to hold the Freetown and Nairobi Round-Table Conferences.

The Association would like to thank all other organizations and individuals who helped to make both Round-Table Conferences a success. Special mention is made of Miss Elizabeth Getachew of the AAPAM Secretariat for typing the original study report very diligently.

Finally, the Association thanks go to Dr. Laban Kirya for agreeing to undertake the task of rapporteur at the Freetown Round-Table and to Mr. J. Kayila for diligently keeping track of the Conference

discussions in Nairobi. Without their record of the respective discussions, it would not have been possible to produce this book. Special mention should also be made Mr. S. Nyagah who not only acted as Chief Rapporteur for the Nairobi Conference, but undertook the task of editing and putting the manuscript together for publication.

Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

CORNELIUS K. DZAKPASU
Secretary-General
AAPAM

Opening Statement by
Professor Adedayo Adedeji
President of AAPAM

Mr. Vice President,
Honourable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the people and Government of the Republic of Kenya for their generosity in hosting this Round-Table on the future of African Public Service. It is indeed gratifying that this generous hospitality, which is so characteristic of the Kenyan people and their Government, is once again being offered to AAPAM. For eleven years ago, in 1968, we held a seminar in Nairobi and all of those who attended that seminar still have a vivid memory of the kind of hospitality which the Kenya Government and people so graciously provided. The seminar was further honoured by the President of Kenya, H.E. Daniel Arap Moi, then Vice-President, who addressed it and from whose speech we derived a lot of inspiration which guided the seminar discussions. On this occasion we have been similarly honoured by the Vice President, the Honourable Mwai Kibaki, whose speech this morning has been both enlightening and stimulating. I would like, therefore, to thank him on your behalf as well as on my own behalf for honouring us by opening the AAPAM 1979 Round-Table.

This Round-Table, as you all know, is a continuation of the dialogue which AAPAM launched this time last year in Freetown, Sierra Leone, when we discussed in broad terms the type of public service that has developed over the years and its adequacy or otherwise in enabling African Governments and people to meet the challenges of the 1980s. Because we were generally dissatisfied with the state of our public service and because of our consciousness of

the tremendous challenges ahead of us in the 1980s we agreed that our Freetown general review should be followed by a study of the profile of an African Public Service in the 1980s and that the findings of this study should be the subject of this our second AAPAM Round-Table on the matter. Let me at this juncture thank, on your behalf, the members of our Association on whose shoulders fell the responsibility of carrying out the duty. They are Mr. C.H.M. Barlow (Chairman), Drs. K.A. Owusu-Ansah and G. Mutahaba and Mr. Charles Wyse. Let me also express on your behalf my most sincere appreciation to the Governments and officials of the eight countries visited by the team for their co-operation without which the task of the team would have been nigh impossible and this second Round-Table would not have been held. I am also grateful to the countries that have presented national papers to supplement the paper produced by the team. While all these papers should provide excellent background documentation for our Round-Table, they are not intended to limit the range and scope of our discussions. For the challenge before this Round-Table is to answer the question "What kind of a public service does Africa need"? This is a question to which we must provide at this Round-Table some elements of an answer.

Indeed, during the past twelve months, particularly since our Freetown Round-Table, the search for an authentic African identity has been given a new boost by ECA and OAU. In February 1979, ECA and OAU jointly sponsored a colloquium on *Perspectives of Development and Economic Growth in Africa up to the year 2000*. The question before that colloquium was "What kind of development does Africa need and how can it achieve that kind of development"? A month later, ECA organized, in collaboration with UNEP, an intergovernmental seminar on *Alternative Patterns of Development and Life Styles for the African Region* which was again concerned with the same question.

The background to these ECA/OAU initiatives is the growing and nagging uncomfortable realisation that Africa is being left very much behind in the race for development; that today, after nearly two decades of independence, neither high rates of growth nor of diversification, nor an increasing measure of self-reliance has been achieved for the African economy; that we are today more dependent on the outside world economically than ever before in respect not only of skilled manpower, entrepreneurial resources,

capital goods and services, consumer goods but also even on food and raw materials. As I said at the opening of the *Seminar on Alternative Patterns of Development and Life Styles*, "we in Africa have over the years become the mimic people. Although we pretend to be real, to be learning, and to be preparing ourselves and our countries for self-reliant development process and an authentically African life style, all we really have succeeded in doing is to mimic other societies and their life styles. In doing so we use borrowed phrases, jargons and terminologies which are foreign to our people and only succeed in beclouding the issues before us and in confusing our people".

Or to put it the way I did on 18 December, 1975 when I had the privilege of giving the 1975 Tom Mboya Lecture under the auspices of the Kenya Institute of Management and under the distinguished chairmanship of the Vice-President, African countries should not aim at becoming small Americans or imitations of France and England or Soviet-type republics. This is not to suggest, I went on, that Africa should not borrow from these countries and many others. It is not even to suggest that some countries should not, if they so desire, adopt more from the West while others, if they wish, adopt more from the Soviet Union or China. But what is being argued is that a development and modernisation process that is externally oriented, that is based on copying other societies hook, line and sinker and which fosters the disintegration of its native culture and institutions will soon wither away or at most have a very stunted growth. This is why we have had untold problems with the public service we intended at independence. Although we have undertaken a number of patchworks through various administrative reform measures, they are as organised and structured, staffed and—though managed—still basically an imitation—increasingly a poor imitation—of former metropolitan countries' public services.

It is precisely for this reason that AAPAM has the great responsibility of answering the question insofar as public administration and management is concerned. What kind of a public service does Africa need and how can it create and nourish that kind of public service? We should continue the search for the answer until we eventually find out. This is not going to be easy but it is a responsibility we owe to the African peoples and their Governments.

No doubt, our answer to this question will depend in part on our answer to the question about the kind of development that Africa needs. In the statement which I made at the OAU/ECA Colloquium

in Monrovia, I tried to answer the question as to the kind of development that Africa needs in these words:

My answer then to the question: what kind of development does Africa need? Is that we need to set in motion a development process that puts the individual in the very centre of the development effort; a development process that is both human and humane without necessarily softening the discipline that goes with development but which enhances man's personality; a development process that does not alienate man from his society and culture but rather develops his self-confidence in himself and identifies his interest with those of his society and thereby develops his ability and willingness for self-reliance. In the attainment of its development objectives, the society must release the latent energies of its people, galvanize such energies and by interacting them with material resources through the intervention of the application of technology sustain the needs of the society in an equitable and just manner.

In other words, in designing an authentically African pattern of development and life style we must ensure that it is within the framework of the following six basic conceptual and strategic pillars: national self-reliance and self-sustaining development; democratization of the development process; de-alienation; the creation of favourable political and social environment; the recovery of self-confidence by the peoples of Africa in themselves; and, the willingness to achieve an increasing measure of collective regional self-reliance through effective and meaningful co-operation among African States.

It is within the framework of this kind of development that we must now look at the kind of African public service that will facilitate the achievement of our objectives because we must always remember Clarence L. Blau's statement that "if everything else is done but public administration fails, all fails". Or as Lord Trevelyan aptly puts it in regard to foreign assistance, "giving foreign aid to a country without a reasonable standard of administration is like putting the latest electronic equipment on a ship with a leaky bottom". Therefore, our ultimate objective in public administration and management should be to install in every African country a public administrative system which promotes the achievement of an

increasing measure of national self-reliance and self-sustaining development; an administrative system which is not only democratic but promotes the democratization of the development process; administrative system which in conception, orientation, structure and organization is not alien to our society; and, an administrative system that is responsive to our changing needs and is dedicated to the task of engineering the socio-economic transformation of our economies.

I have no doubt that in time AAPAM, through the co-operation of all practitioners and students of public administration, of politicians and the public, will come out with profiles of an African public service that are genuinely African and not merely transplants from across the Atlantic. While I entirely agree with Machiavelli that "there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more difficult of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things", we in Africa have no viable alternative if we are to lay a sound and enduring foundation for progress and evolve our own problem of development and life-styles and our own public and private institutions. While it is also generally true, as Machiavelli went on to say that "the reformer has enemies in all who profit by the old order and only lukewarm defenders in those who would profit by the new order", we can say that in so far as AAPAM is concerned, our entire membership, the majority of whom are practitioners in the old order of public service, have also been in the forefront of the search for viable alternatives, because we all realise that whatever may be our vested interests, the future of Africa's public service is very much at stake and that, therefore, there is an urgent need for us to do something as we enter the Third United Nations Development Decade which will also be the third decade of independence (Uhuru) for the majority of African countries.

I wish you all a most productive Round-Table. And once more, on your behalf, I thank the Hon. Vice-President for being with us today.

**Keynote Speech made by
H.E. the Vice-President and Minister for Finance,
Hon. Mwai Kibaki*
at the Second Round-Table Conference
of AAPAM,
Nairobi, Kenya**

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you to Kenya for this year's AAPAM Round-Table Conference which is the second in the series the first one having taken place in Freetown, Sierra Leone last year. I would like to extend a very sincere welcome to the guest delegates who are with us here today from other African countries as well as from outside Africa.

The Kenya Chapter of AAPAM has only recently been formed but we look forward to its activities in the future with great faith and plenty of hope.

Mr. Chairman the formation of the Kenya Chapter of AAPAM has met with a lot of enthusiasm from top managers from all sectors of our economy. AAPAM as an association of professional managers and administrators will represent and constantly continue to reflect all the concerns of our national development. We believe that the national chapter will play its rightful role in generating useful ideas which will assist in designing the policies and programmes for national development.

I would like at this stage to make a special mention of the fact that we in Kenya and I believe all of us in Africa owe a lot of gratitude to the administrative capability of the AAPAM Secretariat which is currently located within the ECA in Addis Ababa, for the very successful seminars that have been organised over the years to examine the problems that beset us all. Our special thanks and

* His Excellency Honourable Mwai Kibaki is the Vice President and Minister for Home Affairs.

gratitude go to the ECA, the UNDP, the CFTC, Ford Foundation and other donor organizations without whose contributions in various capacities, some objectives of AAPAM would not have been realized.

Mr. Chairman, AAPAM is now a decade old. Within the years that AAPAM has existed, it has provided an invaluable opportunity for top managers in all sectors of our national economies in Africa to get together and exchange ideas and experiences and as it were, to compare notes.

I understand that the theme of your Round-Table Conference will be "A profile of the public service in the 1980s". Mr. Chairman, I could do no better than to refer this conference to the very valuable document that has been produced by a colloquium that was held under the auspices of the OAU and the ECA at Monrovia earlier on this year. They have produced a report on the shape of the kind of Africa that we want in the 1980s. I believe it sets you the objectives towards which you could begin to design the role that management in public service and in the economy as a whole will play towards their achievement of those objectives. I believe that this is important because there are far too many conferences that continue to take a lot of time on disputes about the objectives. In that particular report there are well defined objectives.

I attended the OAU Conference, Mr. Chairman at Monrovia, but as usual in the political forums, the matters that relate to social and economic affairs tend to be given very low priority, which is a great pity, if I might say so. Mr. Chairman, one of the contributions we look forward to AAPAM to provide is to assist in curing all of us, who are politicians, of the very serious malady, very serious disease, I might say, which continues to afflict us in Africa namely that every conference we go to, we spend 99% of the time disputing the wording of resolutions and above all trying to arrive at a consensus on political resolutions while we know of the need for concrete steps to be taken towards the changes that are needed in the social fabric of our societies and in the economic structure of the independent nations of Africa. The other aspect of the same malady is the fact that after 15 years of independence, most African nations are still preoccupied with fighting some foreign forces—variously described as imperialism or some other "isms". We are unwilling to realize or to appreciate that the problems that face us in Africa are genuinely African and are not strictly speaking, created by external forces. I do

not minimize the fact that to solve our problems particularly in the economic field we shall need the help and the co-operation of other nations in the world. But the first requirement in solving those problems is to appreciate that they are our problems—nobody else's, and that 99% of the solutions should come from self-help and not from somebody else's contributions.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this conference and similar conferences of managers should tackle in an objective manner the question of what kind of Africa we expect to build in the next ten years. It is only if we are agreed on that objective that we can begin to define the role that civil service and managers in other sectors will play. To be able to define that objective, we need to appreciate, I believe, some very important facts.

For instance, and these are only a few examples, Mr. Chairman, it is often forgotten that Africa has the highest proportion of illiterate persons in its population. It is also not realised that despite all the efforts we are making Africa will still be the most illiterate continent in the 1980s. And, therefore, despite all the efforts we are making in Kenya, in all other nations of Africa, we have to tackle the one problem and see the role that all managers have in that field.

Another example, we are all aware now of how far behind Africa is in the field of development of new technologies that are needed for the purposes of utilizing our natural resources for the benefit of the nations in which we live. What is called the technological gap between the poor nations and the rich nations of the world is, in fact, widening because the developed nations are increasing their technological lead at a rate faster than we are trying to catch up. Therefore, in ten years, namely through all the 1980s, the technological gap between the poor nations such as Africa which is still the poorest continent and the developed nations will continue to widen. We shall, therefore, needless to say, continue to require to borrow technology from other more developed nations. I mean, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that you as practical people involved with practical management, should be able to speak to Africa and to say that this requirement to borrow technology should be done without any hesitation or apology. It should be acknowledged that it is a need which we cannot meet from our own resources. It should, therefore, be made much easier for us to recruit people of knowledge from all over the world without their having to be labelled as agents of neocolonialism, as people who are here for a short time while we

are waiting for Africanisation, as people who come only for short contracts. I believe the time has come for us to stop making political apologies to our own people for importation of qualified manpower.

One example in Kenya is we have more resources for the development of water which we all need for our economic development. We have more financial resources than we can make use of. And the reason we cannot make use of resources we have is because of shortage of qualified technologists in the field of water development. We, all of Africa, should honour that this is a requirement and the reality of the situation.

Equally, Mr. Chairman, we must realize that during 1980s the wealth gap, the income gap as it were, between the poor and the rich nations will in fact widen and get infinitely greater than it now is. And, therefore, the easy politics in which we continue to promise our African brothers and sisters that at the end of the 5 years Development Plan we shall have achieved certain targets and therefore we shall have got nearer the more advanced nations. It is time you, as practical people, chose to tell those who employ you the whole truth and nothing but the whole truth: namely, that despite all the efforts that we shall make, we shall be indeed farther in terms of income, from the developed nations than we now are after the first, the second, the third and the fourth Development Plans. It is a very hard fact to be said. Above all, it is so intimidating in the political context that there are very few politicians willing to say so—particularly in nations where there are elections held every so often. But we look to managers to tell their Boards the whole facts and you are managers. We expect you to tell us the facts!

Mr. Chairman, another example is population. We in Africa find excuses, one after the other, sometimes that our customs cannot be changed very quickly. Sometimes that our religions will be against the principle of family planning. Sometimes, we find excuses that the growth of population is not the real issue, that indeed we were developing rapidly in the economic field and population will take care of itself. You as managers know that all these excuses are utterly untenable. You know the honest truth—that in fact the rate of population growth within Africa is related to the rate at which we are developing other resources.

The rate of growth of population neutralizes whatever gains we have in the growth of income. That fact has not been told boldly and without qualifications to the people of Africa. We look to the

managers such as yourselves to help us carry this message, because you are able to marshal all the facts and you are able to face because I always believe that it is the role of the manager to face the facts even if they are difficult, and to tell his Board and the organisation that he is managing what the future holds. So on population, let all of us be able to speak with one voice, namely that if we are undertaking the planning and development of other resources we must also undertake the planning and development of population. Otherwise we will not make any progress.

Mr. Chairman, another example is we have all been independent, for more than fifteen years. I believe the time has come for us to be able to say to our people that the period of honeymoon with the concept of national sovereignty, so jealously guarded, that every question is judged on that criteria, is now over. But, indeed, as tiny little nations, tiny in terms of the market size, tiny in the terms of the resources available to us, tiny in terms of the capacities to initiate development; these tiny nations do not really have the slightest chance of achieving a breakthrough in the economic and political fields. We must agree to emphasize less the idea of national sovereignty and emphasize more the need to co-operate in the task of development. Above all to appreciate that there is no other way open to us, perhaps it is more important, to be able to point to Europe and other regions. Whereas advanced nations which probably needed less to co-operate with each other have come to appreciate how much they need each other yet we the poor countries are so preoccupied with our poverty that our horizons do not seem to rise high enough, to enable us appreciate the fact that we must co-operate.

I emphasize this, Mr. Chairman, because of the priority which we should attach to such fields as communication and exchange systems in Africa; exchange of information which research stations have accumulated in some parts of Africa and exchange of training facilities. This is all called for but it is not happening, precisely because we still believe in the slogans that we shouted before independence. You all remember that before independence we used to preach to the people that we must "achieve first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added to it." You and I now know after fifteen years of experience that, that particular slogan has not yet proved to be true and is unlikely to be proven to be true. What we should do now is perhaps to "seek the economic kingdom", the

development of our resources and then only that way shall other things be added to it.

Now I think that this is what is required from yourselves, from people of your calibre because the knowledge you have is not the knowledge available freely in the nations from which you come.

Another example worth examining is that in Africa we are facing a very real danger of being divided along ideological lines—by preachers, some of them indigenous, some of them foreign, some of them rejects from other regions of the world who think that Africa is a virgin territory to be experimented with. They come to Africa to preach new ideologies as the true salvation to us. All of you who are here know that the world that we know is less and less divided on basis of ideology. It is getting more and more divided as between those that are poor and those that are rich. Indeed, the co-operation that is now developing between the industrialised capitalistic nations and the industrialised communist nations is phenomenal. A few examples of such co-operation are in the fields of the development of sea bed, the development of space, the development of all other technological fields. The co-operation is phenomenal. But Africa allows itself to continue to be experimental ground for everybody's theory; particularly theories tried and discarded in other regions of the world or theories propagated by people who died and got buried about a hundred years ago. I think Mr. Chairman, we are failing to utilize the available managerial talent of people like yourselves who ought to be able to judge the needs of Africa in the context of the world of today. As I might put it, Africa must now be able to discard the quotations from theories. Let us have people with the education that you have who are willing to look at the practical Africa as it is today and develop the theory of development based on the reality as we see it now rather than be content to merely having a series of quotations from this writer and that writer, because those people wrote about certain other circumstances, certain other societies, certain periods of time and hence cannot be necessarily or logically relevant to Africa of today. I emphasize this point because this is the area where we need you more than any other area; because as you well know, those of us that are politicians, have no time to do detailed thinking. Indeed, 90% of the time we are disowning theories but as you know that John M. Keynes said, "those people who disown theories, they are probably slaves to some long dead theories of somebody". But we

really need your help here, because we are wide open, too wide open, defenceless as nations when we are attacked by people with new well conceived theories particularly if they are worded in the kind of language which is appealing to us as politicians. And you know we spend 50% of the time concentrating on how to express an idea, because the "how" to express may be what shall get you the votes.

Mr. Chairman, finally may I also mention to you another area where you might concentrate as professional managers. Within Africa today, we are in danger of getting into another problem—that has faced many other nations which eventually discarded it. Europe is no longer facing the problem I am about to mention, namely, that when we talk of development of countries, the development of Kenya or any other country we are really talking about the development or the enlargement of the welfare of individual citizens, living people and we are not talking about something called the republic which is greater, over and above citizens. I mention this because too many of the theories of the development that are expounded, too many of the proposals on how to organize civil service, too many of the proposals as to the type of management we need, are all worked out on the presumptions about the needs of the nation. And at the back of some minds of people propagating these theories, they imagine something called a nation or republic which is quite apart and far superior, and having greater priority than the welfare of individuals. This kind of theory leads to subjugation of the freedom of the individual in the name of the republic—a common good. It leads to reduction of freedom of the individual because we are told freedom must be reduced in order that we may achieve the national interest. It also leads to arrangements of single parties where a committee of twelve people becomes supreme. And it pronounces on all matters from what you may wear to what you may eat, to what kind of social life you should have, even to what kind of religion is suitable to a particular area. Now imagine that twelve people chosen at random, because that is what happens, from a population of 14 or 20 million or 15 million. They become so supreme that they will pronounce on all aspects of the lives of millions of people. It is one of the most frightening concepts, because it is dictatorship in another form, but we are unwilling to face the reality, namely to go back to the original concept that development is the enlargement of the welfare of the individual, it is

the conservation of the freedom of the individual, freedom to enjoy the kind of life that he chooses and that, therefore, the best social and political system is one that allows the individual to choose who will govern him.

That is the only system that has been proven. There has been no other system up to now, proven. I am expressing my own conviction. Many of you may not be convinced. That is the purpose of having the conference.

Mr. Chairman, I wish you well in that dispute. I believe we should all retain an open mind. To be a developing nation is to retain an open mind. To be dogmatic is to cease to be developing.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, your conference is now truly open.

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Chapter 1

The Public Service Crisis in Independent African Countries

C.H.M. BARLOW¹

INTRODUCTION. Three papers were presented on the sub-theme — The Public Service Crisis in African Countries. These were :

1. "The Public Service Crisis in African Countries", by C.H.M. Barlow;

2. "Public Service Crisis in Independent African Countries: Problem Areas, Weaknesses and Remedies for the Challenges of the 1980s", by G.K. Kariithi,²

3. "Forging Better Relations within Public Services", by W.N. Wamalwa.³

The three papers reviewed the problems that African Public Services have faced, and are currently facing since independence, suggested some remedial measures and expressed fears that if nothing was done urgently to improve the services, a crisis may ensue. Whilst the first two papers tried to tackle as many of the problems as they could, Mr. Wamalwa's paper concentrated its analysis more specifically on problems of relationships between the different entities of the public service and their impact on performance.

¹ C.H.M. Barlow was, until 1980, the Secretary-General of African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM). Currently he is the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President and Head of Civil Service in Uganda.

² G.K. Kariithi joined the Kenya Public Service in 1950 from Makerere University. He held many top-level posts before being appointed Permanent Secretary to the President and Head of the Civil Service in 1968. He retired in September, 1979.

³ W.N. Wamalwa was, until recently, the Executive Chairman of Kenya Chemelil Sugar Company. He was Permanent Secretary and Director of Personnel Management in Kenya, and later on became Chairman of the Public Service Commission and Chairman and member of a number of Administrative reform commissions.

Despite the title of the sub-theme, all three authors recognized and complimented African Public Services for considerable achievements during the very difficult two post-independence decades. Mr. Kariithi's and Mr. Wamalwa's papers are summarised whilst Mr. Barlow's paper is reproduced in full.

This paper will concentrate on the problems and current shortcomings of African Public Services, and only touch in passing the foreseeable problems of the next decades. However, it is the sum total of the presently unresolved problems and those to be faced in the 1980s that constitute the public service crisis. The title forces one to be one sided and to discuss only the problems, failures, and shortcomings of the services; but the tremendous achievements of many African public services must be briefly mentioned if only to give balance to what would otherwise read as a one sided discussion of shortcomings.

Except for Morocco, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan and Ghana, the rest of African countries have only been independent for less than twenty years. This very short time has been a time of tremendous; rapid and often traumatic changes. These countries have experienced the change from being colonies to independent nations; they have undergone the change from the euphoria and great hopes of independence to disillusionment and even to cynicism; their constitutions have been suspended, amended, abolished and rewritten. They have faced world economic instability, currency and commodity price fluctuations and the oil crisis. Most of them have seen their precarious unity at independence crumble and turn into open tribal animosity and even to civil war.

Numerous positive changes have also been achieved which have been no less challenging than those mentioned above. These states have successfully launched themselves into the international community, in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and in many other regional and inter-regional organizations, such as the now defunct East African Community, the European Economic Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund etc. They have almost indigenised their public services, and made impressive, if not wholly successful progress towards indigenising the key sectors of their economies. These range from large-scale farming to steel manufacture, from operating taxis to running international ship-

ping and airlines. Their public utilities corporations are running electricity supplies, water and sewage services, international telecommunications, harbours, banks, insurance etc. New universities have been built and old ones expanded. One could go on listing other achievements. These are no mean achievements by any standards given the length of time and the circumstances. Much of the credit for steering these rapid changes and scoring the mentioned achievements goes to the public services of these countries.

It is necessary, right at the beginning of the analysis of the crisis of African Public Services, to note the wide differences among African countries. They have bewildering differences in ethno-cultural heritage, colonial experiences, stages of socio-economic development, natural resources and in leadership, ideological and political goals. It is therefore impossible in a paper of this length to cover the specific and accurate situation of each particular country. What follows, therefore, are broad but fairly accurate description and analysis of problems that are currently being faced, or which have been experienced by many of these countries in different degrees of intensity. It must also be pointed out that the problems, their causes and the results are often so interrelated that it is not possible to avoid a certain amount of repetition.

The problems discussed, therefore, are arbitrarily grouped under five main headings and these should not be considered exhaustive of every aspect of this very wide subject.

Problems Originating from the Pre-independence Legacy

Africa was never an administrative vacuum. Africa had empires like the Ghana Empire, the Songhai Empire, the powerful Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria, the strong centrally controlled kingdoms in Uganda, the Democratic Elders' Councils as in Kenya, to mention only a few indigenous administrative systems. The colonial scramble for Africa, however, arbitrarily and indiscriminately cut across all these systems of African native administrations and proceeded to rule and administer Africa in ways not only different from the varying native African systems, but also differing in accordance to whether the colonising power was French, British, German or Italian. Some of the colonising powers made some use of native African systems of administration in ruling their colonies but others tried to destroy or ignore them. For example, the British colonial system of "indirect rule" was used by Lord Lugard in

Northern Nigeria and Uganda in respect of the lacustrine kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole and Toro. In Uganda, the Kiganda administrative structure was imposed onto the rest of Uganda and Buganda chiefs were used by the British colonial government to enforce the system.

Where indirect rule was practised, those ethnic groups to which it was applied had their native systems strengthened and entrenched, giving rise to feelings of superiority and to demands for federal constitutions at independence to safeguard their privileged positions, e.g. in Nigeria and Uganda.

In other areas, direct rule was practised and chiefs and "headmen", directly appointed by the colonial administrators, in complete disregard of the native systems, were imposed onto the people as in Kenya and many francophone countries. On top, and above all these experiments of convenience, was the colonial services *per se* providing the central government administration in each colony. The colonial civil services were distinct from the home services of the colonising powers. They were tailor-made for the purpose of administering a colonized people primarily for the benefit of the colonising power. Whatever socio-economic benefits the subject people got from the colonial administrations was subsidiary to the main purpose of subjugating a people.

At independence, therefore, the African States inherited the following legacies :

- (a) Independence constitutions that tried to accommodate as best as they could ethno-cultural development, linguistic, religious and political differences, but at the same time were meant to facilitate the building of a nation-state out of a conglomerate of peoples arbitrarily and involuntarily brought together. The constitutions also entrenched and perpetuated colonial blunders which the colonial powers had failed to solve.
- (b) Public services with structures, processes and procedures, conditions of service, tradition and attitudes that were not primarily designed to serve the aspirations and goals of the newly independent states.
- (c) Staggering socio-economic underdevelopment and extremely weak indigenous private sectors in their economies.

These legacies have had direct and severe effects on the public

services in independent Africa. First, in many cases the unsuitable independence constitutions were found either unworkable or a hindrance to the nation-building efforts of the new states and they had to be scrapped immediately or shortly after independence. In the search for suitable constitutions, conflicts arose which, at least in Nigeria, even resulted into a vicious civil war. Elsewhere they have continued to cause serious strains and stresses, which, together with other factors, have resulted in coups and counter coups, suspension of constitutions and strong communal antipathies. The consequent upheavals and instability have resulted in an absence of definite political and socio-economic goals and stable styles of government, towards the achievement of which, suitable public services can be built. In addition, many experienced civil servants have been victims of these upheavals. There has, as a result, developed in many services a sense of deep insecurity, substantially contributing to the brain-drain now being experienced as well as the practice of early retirement from public service jobs. It is recognized that the legacy is only one of many causes of this situation but it is a significant cause. This situation is still with us today. Many African countries have not finally decided what type of political and socio-economic goals they want to pursue so that the public services, as a tool to achieving the decided goals, can be moulded accordingly. The instability and the resultant insecurity are devastating the morale, devotion and the esprit de corps of the services to dangerously low levels.

Secondly, the efforts to build nations out of diverse and often disunited communities have in many cases resulted into either over-centralization of political power, greater administrative control and expertise at the centre, to the detriment of the periphery institutions; or in weak ineffective central government services with numerous duplications at the state or regional government levels. Both alternatives have hindered socio-economic development efforts and generated disillusionment, discontent and doubt of the public services' abilities "to deliver the goods".

Nation-building efforts though centrally and tightly controlled bureaucracies do often seriously hinder socio-economic development since they tend to be rife with administrative bottlenecks, they frustrate popular local involvement and participation, and often result in authoritarian and domineering central government bureaucrats, and unqualified, over-submissive and inefficient regional ones. The regional or local government public services in some cases

tend to be confined to maintaining law and order, collecting revenue for the central government and carrying out orders from the centre. The duties of developing the rural citizens and their resources become of secondary importance and tend to be difficult to co-ordinate because of the distant and often contending decision centres of the vertical structures of centrally controlled administrations.

There are other nation-building practices whose effects on public services are detrimental, although their long-term nation-building goals, if achieved, may outweigh the short-term damage they cause. There are practices such as distributing top posts in the services on ethno-cultural or religious criteria rather than on merit alone so as to induce a sense of belonging or involvement in the less advanced minority groups in the state. There is also the vexed problem of distribution of development projects using the same criteria as above rather than on the basis of economic viability and the other normal criteria. These practices frustrate public servants and the general public who may fall victims of the practices.

Thirdly, independence, though long struggled for and expected, had a traumatic effect on African public services. First, almost invariably in every country, no serious thought was given to consciously restructuring and modifying the public services, terms and conditions of service, attitudes and relationships between the services, the politicians and the general public, to adapt them to the tremendously changed roles they now had to play. There is a vast difference between colonial and national public services. The former is a law and order-oriented system of administration designed primarily for the continued subjugation and exploitation of a people; whereas the latter, maintains law and order all right, but aims at the liberation and development of a people and their resources. Therefore their structures, attitudinal approaches, tactics, and motivation must be substantially different. Unfortunately, during the trauma and euphoria of independence, neither the outgoing colonials, nor the incoming politicians or the indigenous civil servants paid sufficient attention and effort to effect changes in public services so as to orient them to their new roles. To this day, most African States still live with obsolete law and order rather than development-oriented structures, domineering rather than service-oriented, coercive rather than persuasive and participative attitudes in public services.

The ambition to rapidly overcome the inherited socio-economic underdevelopment has forced independent African States to intervene in the industrial, agricultural, commercial and other sectors of their economies at a speed and scale hitherto unknown except in socialist or communist revolutionary periods. The absence of a strong indigenous private sector which could be relied on to undertake some of the necessary economic development, the powerful desire to wrestle control of their economies from foreign domination, and the socialistic tendencies, left governments with no alternative but to intervene in the socio-economic sectors through public enterprises. The adoption of public enterprises as a tool with which to achieve economic independence, control of their economies, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of wealth than private enterprise, was inevitable. In many instances there has been minimal planning; and the mere legal creation of a state corporation has been taken as sufficient to ensure its success. Corporations have been created overnight which are unplanned, underfinanced, understaffed and for which insufficient supervisory and monitoring arrangements have been made. Appointments to top managerial posts have in numerous cases been made on purely political and nepotistic criteria rather than on proven managerial ability. The shortcomings and problems of public enterprises are well known and well documented to be detailed in this article. The point being made is that this almost unplanned and uncontrolled mushrooming of public enterprises, occurring as it has often done, in the key sectors of the economies of the countries, is capable of developing into a serious crisis in some countries if it continues unresolved.

Underdevelopment goes with poverty. The dire poverty of most African States, combined with worldwide financial instability, violent commodity price fluctuations, inflation and trade recession, have all driven African States into overcentralization of financial control in an effort to conserve and distribute more equitably scarce financial resources. This has often resulted in non-viable, weak and insolvent local governments, with no hope of attracting able and qualified staff. In the public enterprise sector, this has resulted in excessive and sometimes ignorant financial intervention into the public enterprises that were meant to be relatively independent of such control. Profits that ought to have been ploughed back have been diverted to unconnected and often irrelevant social services at the

expense of the enterprises. The result is bottlenecks in financial management, inefficiency, frustration, growing dissatisfaction with public enterprise performances and a real danger of many such enterprises collapsing.

All these problems from the inherited legacy are with us today and comprise a time bomb that can explode with devastating effect if not detonated in time.

Problems that Arise Out of the Confidence-gap and Inadequate Leadership in Public Services

The ideal relationship between the public servant and his political masters is that of mutual confidence, trust and respect. This is especially so in respect of the senior cadres of Permanent Secretaries, General Managers of State Enterprises and Heads of Departments.

Serious problems have arisen and exist in this area. During the colonial days the colonial civil service and the indigenous politicians were generally arch-enemies. They belonged to opposing camps. Even indigenous civil servants were involved in the battle! They were instructed to have nothing to do with the "trouble rousers" otherwise their careers would come to an abrupt end.

At independence, before indigenisation of the service was accomplished, expatriate provincial commissioners were the first permanent secretaries to work under their former adversaries (now the ministers). Obviously, mutual confidence, respect and trust were hard to establish in such circumstances.

This situation sowed the first seed of mistrust and suspicion between politicians and civil servants. But this unfortunate atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust persisted even longer after most services had been Africanised. Genuine advice against impracticable or ill conceived projects which often are political promises to the electorate, is considered 'sabotage'. Ordinary bureaucratic procedures and practices are considered 'delaying tactics'. Strict financial control is 'undermining'.

On the other hand, the civil servants professionally assessing some of the wild impractical projects concluded that politicians are reckless, irresponsible, or nepotistic. An unfortunate confidence gap exists. Each regards the other with suspicion. The political leaders, who consider themselves the vehicles and interpreters of the citizens' aspirations and wishes, often feel that their public servants are bent on frustrating them and getting them unpopular with the

people. This is especially the case whenever a new party comes into power or the armed forces take over the reigns of the government. Military leaders, for example, are trained and used to quite a different type of discipline, such as unquestioning obedience to the commander, prompt execution of an order often irrespective of costs. When they have to work with civil servants trained to look at issues carefully, assess alternatives and write back suggesting a completely different approach to the execution of a decision, they are greatly irritated and see 'sabotage' all over the place!

Many public servants consider politicians as bent on getting cheap popularity at the expense of the country as a whole. The fundamental cause of these differences is that, whereas political leaders do on the whole take a short-term and often predetermined and partisan point of view because of the nature of politics, public servants often take a long-term and often detached aspect because of their training and the permanence and security of their posts. If only these two approaches could be jointly taken into account, the outcome could be a very balanced and relevant approach to development and administration of many countries. But this cannot be done until there is mutual understanding, respect and confidence between the politicians and their public servants.

There is also a confidence gap between the public services and the general public. One of its origins is the colonial heritage. The colonial civil service was part and parcel of the ruling colonial regime. Colonial civil servants were the masters of those they were supposed to serve. Their authoritarian and domineering attitude has been inherited unquestionably by many indigenous public servants and in a number of cases exacerbated by the appointment, either through lack of better candidates, or through nepotism, of officers unequal to the post to which they are appointed, and who, in an effort to get the respect they do not naturally command, have to unduly assert their authority to cover their deficiencies. These attitudes have alienated the general public who often regard indigenous public servants as more authoritarian and domineering than their colonial predecessors!

There exists a confidence gap between the central government and regional or local government public services. The central government service as incompetent, corrupt and unqualified (which is true in many cases for obvious and well known reasons). This has often led to powerful senior public servants opposing reforms tend-

ing to devolve more responsibilities to local authorities, because they consider them to be associated with inefficiency and poor staffing.

Some of the main causes of this prevalent mistrust are:

- (a) lack of purposeful dialogue between the various groups; and
- (b) inadequate leadership both at the political and civil service level in the public services.

In January 1978 in Kenya, the ministers, members of Parliament and all their top civil servants spent three days in a joint meeting hammering out principles of what they called "The Kenya We Want". They critically and frankly reviewed their performance. They discussed the national goals and aspirations and how to achieve them. They critically looked at each others' shortcomings and made a series of recommendations to the government to be taken as future guidelines. It is not known yet whether these guidelines will be followed, but one hopes they will be. That is the type of purposeful dialogue one would like to see develop between the different groups. It would probably generate mutual confidence and respect, if say, twice a year cabinet had a two-day round-table discussions with top public service executives enabling both parties to frankly air their views on government policy priorities, mode of their execution and other important matters. That type of dialogue would gradually build up mutual confidence and respect or at least reduce the misunderstandings and mistrust.

Another approach to resolving or improving relationships between politicians and their bureaucracies has been the politicisation of the public services. In trying to solve the problem of relationship, this approach has created serious problems of its own. In multi-party states, politicisation means public servants openly aligning themselves with the party in power against the opposition parties. Should an opposition party come into power, then those public servants who had aligned themselves to the former ruling party immediately become extremely suspected and are most likely to be removed. The end result is the development of a practice tantamount to the American 'spoils' system which Africa cannot afford in its present manpower situation.

Even in a single party state, where it has been argued that politicisation would work well, it does create problems. There are

personal rivalries and factions even with a single party and these rivalries and factions become reflected within the public service creating disunity and animosity.

But even irrespective of whether it is in a single or multi-party state, politicisation of public services inevitably creates indiscipline through widespread political patronage, and inevitably, a number of public servants are bound to become useless sycophants with no minds of their own and incapable of well considered and professional advice to the politicians. There can be little doubt that the best possible situation is for the politician and public servants remaining two fairly distinct functional entities, respectful and complementing each other in a joint effort to administer their countries. Politicisation of public services will have to be reconsidered in view of the problems it generates.

Regarding leadership of the public services both at the political and service level, this generally leaves a lot to be desired. In most of the newly independent African countries, the Head of State is the appointing authority of the public service. In practice, however, his powers in this respect are delegated to an independent Public Service Commission and/or to a Directorate of Personnel and ministers, except in respect of the appointments of Permanent/Principal and senior officers in sensitive posts like Commissioner of Police, the Chief Justice, Controller and Auditor General; etc.

There is, however, the growing and noticeable tendency in many countries for the Heads of State to take back these delegated powers and make appointments even at lower levels. Heads of State are extremely busy people and it sometimes becomes difficult for them to find time to attend to the numerous appointments and to scrutinise them as thoroughly as they genuinely would want to. The result is that public services are full of officers holding very responsible posts for years in acting capacities only! These officers are demoralised and not confident of themselves because they think the long delays in being substantively appointed may be due to their not being thought fit for the post, or their loyalty being held in doubt. Other appointments made without due scrutiny of the contenders for the posts, are proving failures; while the more competent officers who are bypassed are disillusioned and the morale of the public service goes down.

In most countries there are officers designated Heads of Civil Service. They are usually permanent secretaries to the Heads of

State. Their duties and responsibilities in their capacities as Heads of Civil Service are often not defined or detailed anywhere. Nevertheless, they are accepted as the leaders of the public service. There is great potential for good if Heads of Civil Service played an active role in leadership. They could be the link to bring about better understanding and mutual trust and respect between the politicians and the public services. They could create a spirit of co-operation and teamwork within the public service. They could also bring about better relations between the public services and the general public. They can be the spokesmen and champions of the public services and they could really boost up the sagging morale.

Unfortunately, the Permanent Secretary to a Head of State in Africa is one of the busiest men in the country. It is often impossible for him to find sufficient time to effectively act as a team leader of the public services. Since the duties of the Head of Civil Service are undefined, unless he is a very confident and a well trusted man in government circles, it is common for the holder to play a very passive role in that capacity. Thus many public services in practice have no team leader and spokesman and have to suffer silently "without bitterness". As a group they cannot initiate anything outside their individual responsibilities; nor can they voice complaints together.

There is a strong case for separating the role of Head of Civil Service from the Permanent Secretary to the Head of State and defining the duties of the Head of Civil Service. The headship of the public service would be a full-time job among whose responsibilities would be fostering better understanding and relations between the services and the politicians, within the services themselves, and between the services and the general public. Of course, he must be a hand picked person who commands respect not only in the public service but equally so among the politicians and the general public.

The Manpower Crisis

The problem of adequate and suitably qualified and attitudinally well-oriented manpower is not by any means confined to African developing countries. The growing expansion and complexity of public services all over the world has resulted in manpower problems even in very developed countries. However, this problem is far more acute in the newly independent countries because of:

- (a) the colonial powers' gross neglect of developing the man-

- power resources of their colonies especially in the public services;
- (b) the phenomenal expansion of state responsibilities after independence especially in the public enterprise sector;
- (c) the instability that has caused insecurity resulting in diffident and indecisive public servants, low morale and a certain amount of brain-drain;
- (d) inadequate manpower planning as regards quantity, quality and type of public servants needed; and
- (e) resources both financial and human to train, develop and motivate the public service manpower.

This last point deserves some elaboration because of its importance. Development and motivation of public services is a function that has been sadly neglected in many African countries. There are many factors that do help to develop and motivate an individual to optimum productivity, such as training, good working environment, terms and conditions of service, an interesting and challenging job; but perhaps the most important ones are recognition and due respect to him as a human being, from his superiors; the small personal touches, such as his good work being appreciated and his mistakes being firmly and fairly pointed out to him; his opinion being listened to, a little sympathy for even his personal problems. This positive aspect of personnel management and development is sadly lacking at all levels in the public services.

While most African States have tried to revise their rules, regulations and standing orders, it is regretted that in some countries, these rules, regulations and standing orders have not been adequately explained and made available to all public officers. It has also been observed that in a lot of cases, these rules and regulations have been made with very little flexibility built in them and thus those who have been responsible for their administration have translated them too rigidly and without any powers of discretion. It is recognized that in any organized society, rules and regulations are inevitable if standards have to be maintained, but it should also be recognized that such rules and regulations can stifle initiative if they are not adapted to the circumstances of the time.

It is a well known fact that so hardened are the attitudes and so routinised the systems and procedures that the ministries and/or directorates responsible for the public services are more concerned with the enforcement and interpretation of rules, regulations and

standing orders, without due regard to their effect on the employees. Most of officers posted in ministries to look after personnel and establishment matters may be able to quote "book and verse" of all standing orders and government circulars, but know almost nothing about human relations, or the need to develop and motivate a work-team. The same applies to state corporations where the key post of personnel manager is often arbitrarily filled without due consideration of its role.

The permanent secretaries and general managers are finally responsible for motivating and inspiring their respective institutions. They must, however, be helped by able assistants because these officers are terribly busy. Most important however, they too must be motivated to be able to motivate their staff. Who, therefore, is primarily responsible for motivating and developing teamwork in public services? Is it the Head of Civil Service? Is it the minister responsible for public services? Is it the government, the cabinet? Obviously, each one of these entities must play a role at its level of competence, but the final responsibility must squarely be put at the feet of the whole cabinet. Until the cabinet as a whole realises the value and importance of reasonably, contented, inspired and motivated public service and takes the initiative to create these conditions, the scarce and inadequate manpower in African public services cannot be expected to produce optimum results. This problem ought to be given much more priority than what is far more easily given to prestigious and visible projects but which are far less important to Africa.

All these constraints to achieving the sort of manpower required in public service to be able to "deliver the goods", when put together, form a formidable problem that must be resolved urgently.

The Inertia of Administrative Reform Efforts

The existence of the foregoing shortcomings and problems of the public services discussed above, should not frighten anybody unduly. No organisation is perfect for any length of time. Since we do not live in a static world, and situations keep changing all the time, what is perfect today may be inadequate and faulty tomorrow. The thing is to be able to constantly adapt to the changing situations and this is where the problem lies. The core of the public service crisis in African countries is the apparent inability to effect comprehensive administrative reform to meet the changing demands required of these services.

There is no country, of those being considered, that has not attempted and achieved some administrative reform of some sort. Some countries like Tanzania have even effected relatively major administrative reforms in their public services. On the whole however, the reforms that have been implemented in most countries can be described as half-hearted and piecemeal efforts to avert crippling administrative crisis or bottlenecks which inevitably develop in various sectors of the public services. There are very few cases where one can identify well-planned, comprehensive and sustained effort to reform national public services. Even where this has been attempted, such as in Sudan, where a ministry of Administrative Reform has been created, the results have not been as impressive as one would have anticipated.

It is necessary to diagnose the causes of this inertia in administrative reform before one can even begin thinking about how to overcome it. Briefly, it would appear that conditions conducive to planned and self-sustaining reform in the public services have been lacking or have not been developed in many African countries.

Bold and major reforms can best be achieved when a country has a confident, enlightened and secure leadership, at both the political and top public service levels, combined with a definite and firmly held political and socio-economic philosophy towards the achievement of which, the public service can be built. There must, in addition, be a reasonable continuous period of stability and a convinced devoted and efficient machinery to see to it that the desired reforms are continuously identified, thought out, planned and implemented. Lastly there must be genuine mutual trust, confidence and co-operation between the political leaders and their top bureaucrats in the public services.

An analysis of the current situation against the above criteria, leads one to conclude that it has been difficult to effect major reforms in the public service. First, during the last two decades African countries have been undergoing numerous and far-reaching changes in their political, economic and social sectors. These changes have generated insecurity, uncertainty, diffidence and sometimes disillusionment, not only in individual politicians and public servants, but also in governments, the public services and other institutions. It is a natural human reaction to become cautious and even reactionary in such periods of rapid fundamental change, and to hang on to existing institutions and practices, as a base of stability to enable society to withstand the onslaught of the

numerous changes surrounding it. This is especially so if the institutions themselves are deeply involved in managing the changes as the governments and public services inevitably have been.

Secondly, many countries are still searching for and have not yet decided on a definite and widely agreed political and socio-economic goals towards the achievement of which suitable public services can be moulded.

Thirdly, only a few countries can boast of reasonable periods of relative political calm and stability. Similarly very few countries have created institutions and machineries to monitor, identify, plan, and execute the required administrative reforms, and to develop and motivate the manpower resources in their public services. We have also noted that relations between many governments and their public services are still marred by an unfortunate atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion.

Lastly, there is the dilemma as to what type of administrative structures to build, caused by the necessity to build nations out of heterogenous and disunited communities and the necessity for rapid and wide ranging socio-economic development, in a situation of dire poverty. Nation-building on one extreme has very often required highly and rigidly centralised bureaucracies, financial and other resource control which have left little responsibility, innovation and participation at the periphery in order to forestall and monitor any divisive tendencies that detract from the fragile national unity; on the other extreme, some states have resorted to very loose federal patterns where the central government is so weakened that co-ordinated nationwide policy-making is rendered almost impossible. Rapid and extensive socio-economic development requires fairly decentralized forms of government which have developed responsibilities and reasonable freedom in monetary, planning and resource control in order to avoid bureaucratic bottlenecks, facilitate participation and meaningful involvement in the desirable economic and social development but not too much as to render nationwide control, guidance and supervision impotent. African governments are tackling both nation-building and extensive development at the same time. The efforts to strike a happy medium between the two differing bureaucratic structures required by the two tasks of nation-building and socio-economic development, cause dilemmas and hence inertia in administrative reforms.

Is it then futile to hope for successful reforms of African public

services, in the near future, to resolve these great problems they are currently facing? If that is indeed the situation, will it be possible at some later date to build strong public services on this existing foundation which exhibits a considerable number of weaknesses? Can anything be done to create conditions conducive to meaningful and comprehensive reforms to eliminate or reduce these shortcomings so as to enable the African public services to serve their countries better and also face the challenges of the 1980s with confidence and ability?

The Challenges of the 1980s

Brief mention must be made of the challenges of the 1980s to provide a more complete picture of the seriousness of the public services situation and to stress the need for effecting a "turning point". Of course, the problems that will be faced in the 1980s are in some ways crystal gazing. Notwithstanding this aspect, one can fairly and confidently forecast that the public services will face some of the following challenges:

At National Level

- (a) more enlightened, demanding and hopefully more vocal general public;
- (b) greater and more sophisticated technological knowledge and hence greater need for professionalization of the services;
- (c) greater emphasis on development especially the more difficult rural development where the vast majority of African population live;
- (d) domestic implications of the New International Economic Order;

At International Level

- (a) the New International Economic Order;
- (b) "the new scramble for Africa" for its economic resources;
- (c) the East/West struggle for influence and control over Africa;
- (d) a greater and more complicated number of international issues, such as exploitation of the sea bed, the outer space, the energy crisis, transnational corporations, etc.

This is only to mention a few of the major issues. Nevertheless, it is clear that the 1980s will make strenuous demands on African public services which are in fact already strained. Therein lies the crisis of

African public services. Therein lies the danger and the absolute necessity of turning point !

Conclusion

It is obvious that dissatisfaction with the current performance of African public services exist among politicians, the general public and the public servants themselves. As regards a better alternative, there are many alternatives or combinations of alternatives, but a choice has still to be made. Each country must first determine its desired political and developmental goals. It is only then, that it could start to consider the type of public service that is best able to achieve the desired goals. This choice of a better alternative is a function of the political leaders helped by their top bureaucrat advisers. It is very doubtful, however, whether the political and public service leadership is fully aware of the existence of better alternative and therefore can acquire the conviction and required determination to spearhead comprehensive and self-generating reforms and improvement of the main tool of the State (the public service). The machinery and tool to effect and maintain the required changes and reforms can be found.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS PREPARED BY MR. G.K. KARIITHI AND W.N. WAMALWA

Further points were made by Mr. G.K. Kariithi and Mr. W.N. Wamalwa in their papers respectively entitled "Public Service Crisis in Independent African Countries : Problem Areas, Weaknesses and Remedies for the Challenges of the 1980s" and "Forging Better Relations within Public Services".

Both authors complimented African public services for what they had achieved in very difficult and taxing conditions. Mr. Kariithi emphasized the following points which contributed to the crisis :

- (a) African public services suffered badly from low productivity;
- (b) management of already inadequate materials was very poor, as was the management of time;
- (c) research capacities and capabilities were sadly inadequate, and whatever small research data was made available was very poorly used;
- (d) national school curricula were not geared to producing school leavers who had acquired skills applicable and useful to

the developmental needs and other environmental situations; and (e) there was almost no innovation and inventiveness in making use of local resources and capabilities.

Among future challenges, Mr. Kariithi vividly brought out the problem emanating from promotions in African public services. Apart from some form of distribution of senior posts among different ethnic groups for purposes of fostering the fragile national unity, there was the problem of striking a happy balance between seniority and ability as criteria for promotion. Often, both these criteria were overlooked and nepotism practised. Where ability was used, it tended to be personal and subjective due to lack of adequate, and often, complete rational job evaluation against which performance and ability could be efficiently assessed. This problem was intensified by the rapid expansion of public service departments and their responsibilities, both of which points made it impossible for the supervising officers to personally know the individual performance of the officers they supervised.

He further argued that discipline would continue to be a challenge because the powers and responsibilities of the statutory appointing and disciplining institution continued to be eroded and usurped by "certain forces", thus making the enforcement of discipline very difficult. Co-ordination would be another problem area because the relevant powers of the co-ordinating ministries and other institutions were neither statutory nor precisely defined; the dangers of over-centralisation on the one hand, and over-decentralisation on the other, would continue to be a challenge calling for careful decisions; he warned against the blind adoption of either style of administration as solution to the African situation just because it had succeeded elsewhere. He argued that corruption could be eliminated or at least significantly reduced only if leaders ceased to be corrupt.

Mr. Kariithi specially stressed the growing danger of the continuing interference of the East and West power-blocks in the internal affairs of African States. This interference constituted a very serious future challenge which if not checked by African leaders the public services and armed services in a concerted show of national unity, and the suppression of tribalistic antipathies, it would lead to the extinction of the national sovereignty of many African States.

In his paper on "Forging Better Relations within Public Services".

Mr. W.N. Wamalwa defined public services to include "the traditional civil service, local authorities, political parties (or armed forces) and public corporations." Harmonious working relations between the different entities of the public services was essential for good performance. Similarly, bad relations contributed to the crisis situation in African public services.

He argued that although emphasis had previously been put on the conflicting relationship between politicians on one hand, and the civil servants on the other, there were many other dimensions of conflicting views and actions within the public services. He then illustrated the conflicts among the different entities of the public services following his definition above.

He indicated that among the national politicians, conflicts revolving largely around sectional interests and personalities were known to exist widely and he stated that these conflicts were responsible for many disintegrative and divisive forces which, in some cases, were inflated to such dimensions as to threaten the very existence of African nations!

He stated that the long debated conflicts between politicians and civil servants showed no signs of subsiding. These conflicts arose from an absence of mutual trust, respect and understanding between the two groups that were so vital to serving these nations. The conflicts have resulted in a great sense of insecurity which in some cases have led to virtual paralysis of government functions. There appeared to be rivalry and competition, rather than co-operation, between the two entities who should be playing complementary roles.

Among public servants he cited areas of conflict between the administrative generalist and the specialist cadres; between expatriate and local staff and between superior and subordinate staff. Unhealthy relations between subordinate and superior staff were in some cases influenced by African culture; "... in some African cultures the only style of leadership that is understood and which produces results is authoritarian", a sort of master-servant relationship. On the other hand, cases of extreme familiarity are known to exist between superiors and subordinates which most times contributed to poor performance.

There were relationships of conflict between the civil services and the public enterprise sectors which mainly arose from a lack of understanding of the role of public enterprises. Public enterprises

were more often than not viewed and treated as though they were departments of ministries. On the other hand, some public enterprises behaved and acted as if they were small independent 'kingdoms'.

Mr. Wamalwa expressed a fear that public services' relationships appeared to be growing less harmonious than during the immediate post-independence period. He argued that whereas there were no magic solutions to antagonistic personal human relationships, institutional and organisational relationship could be improved by the highest authorities in African States clearly spelling out the roles and functions of interacting institutions and organisations. This could lead to better perception and understanding of each other's complimentary roles and functions and to more harmonious relations.

He further argued that the emergence of a national philosophy combined with a public service code of ethics, and better personnel recruitment, training, management and development would in the long run ameliorate the situation.

As regards relations between civil servants and politicians, he concluded, "we can only hope that with a little more stability, both groups should relate in a more harmonious way. However, civil servants and the staff of *parastatals* (public enterprises) would do well to realise that the room for change in a politician is very much limited. So, they should accept much of the politician as they find him, and use their skills to get the right decisions. Not even revolutions change the nature of politicians"!

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Further points and factors contributing to the crisis were brought out by the discussants, Hon. Abel Mwanga M.P.⁴ and Prof. Kwame E. Adjei⁵ and by the other round-table participants during the discussions that followed. There was considerable general agreement on the analysis of the crisis as presented by these three papers. There were, however, points on which there was divided opinion and

⁴ Hon. Abel Mwanga M.P. is the Minister of Manpower Development in the United Republic of Tanzania.

⁵ Prof. Kwame E. Adjei was then Head of the School of Administration University of Ghana, Legon. He is now Adviser in Training & Development to the Government of Jamaica.

which were vigorously debated. The additional points contributing to the crisis which emerged are briefly stated below:

- (a) In addition to major and/or violent changes in government such as coups, the all too frequent changes in the functional composition and designation of ministries and the reshuffling of ministers and senior public servants contributed to poor performance and a general sense of insecurity among public servants.
- (b) The growing amorphousness and multiplicity of appointing authorities at the expense of eroding the powers and responsibilities of the statutorily created ones, generated patronage and difficulties in disciplining public servants. This problem is further complicated by the deliberate efforts to politicize public services especially the top cadres.
- (c) The scarcity and often complete lack of organised and regular flow of management information and data is a serious hindrance to efficient management practices and policy-making.
- (d) Over-restriction of information by over-classing files as "secret", "top secret" etc. thus denying information to substantial cadres of the public services, was another contributory source of the crisis.
- (e) Denying almost any official information to the press and the general public and treating them as if they were foreign spies!
- (f) The neglect and very often complete absence of on-the-job training of officers.
- (g) The lack of co-operation and mutual trust between the practising administrators and managers, and the academics in institutes and schools of public administration and management.
- (h) The growing practice of public servants engaging in private businesses on top of their public services jobs and, naturally, spending more time and effort promoting their business at the expense of their public service responsibility.
- (i) Lack of a feeling of commitment and sense of duty.
- (j) The craving to live in the urban areas where more services are available and the reluctance of senior officers to be posted to serve in rural areas where the majority of the population live.

Two controversial issues generated a lot of debate. One was "politicisation of the public services", and the other was "leadership of the services".

Regarding politicization of the public services, the participants noted that this was a growing practice in Africa which would probably expand during the 1980s and beyond. The advocates argued that political neutrality of the public services was only necessary in multi-party States where, if the public service had allegiance to the ruling party and then another party came into power, it would naturally suspect the loyalty and devotion of the public service in executing its policy. They argued that since the trend in Africa was definitely towards one-party States, there was no longer any reason why one of the best educated and experienced sections of society should be left out of the most important responsibility of conceptualisation, formulation and execution of the political programmes of that society. Therefore, politicization of the public service and allowing public servants to freely participate in politics was maximising the efficient use of the available scarce manpower resources of a country. They further argued that it would eliminate or reduce the sometimes unhealthy antagonistic relationship between politicians and public servants that had so much hindered development and was a constant cause of insecurity and lack of confidence among public servants. It would also eliminate one area of divisiveness in the nation-building effort.

The opponents to politicizing the public services argued that even in a one-party State, politics and public service are separate and distinct, although they had complementary roles to play, and it was best to keep them so. They argued that politicisation was divisive of the public services. Since the majority of people who join the public services have, on the whole no strong political inclinations, the minority that has those inclinations and who would readily become "political public servants", would always be a favoured group earning easy and probably undeserved promotions vis-a-vis their non-political colleagues. They argued, that even in one-party States, there were divisions and factions within the party; and that these divisions, factions and cliques would be reflected in the public services by virtue of public servants personally aligning with the cliques and factions of the party. They further argued that politicization always brought patronage in its wake; and that this always brought problems of discipline and adversely affecting promotion on merit. It was always risky to discipline an officer who had a strong political patron, as it was easy for those with proper patrons to be promoted on that very criterion. There was no consensus on this vigorously debated point. It was further debated

again in the controversy about leadership of the public service.

Regarding leadership, there was unanimous agreement that there was an urgent need for a dynamic leadership to co-ordinate and motivate the public services and provide smooth linkages with the politicians and public servants thus facilitating improved relations. It was also agreed that it was necessary to define and spell out the duties of the heads of the public services. As to who was best suited to play this role, there was a variety of opinions. Obviously, the most senior permanent/principal secretary (i.e. Permanent Secretary to the President or Head of State) would have been an obvious choice; but it was argued that his duties were so onerous that they left him no time to effectively attend to his responsibilities as Head of the Public Services. The Permanent Secretary in charge of the Ministry of Public Service often did not have the weight of office behind him and could be overlooked by other Permanent Secretaries as an equal. He was not daily in touch with Cabinet Ministers like the Permanent Secretary to the President. Other ideas advanced were the possibility of appointing a person outside the career civil service to perform the job on contract terms; or for the duration of the President's term of office; alternatively appointing a politician, as Zambia had done for some time. Participants, however, were fairly agreed about the need to separate the defined duties of the Head of Public Service from those of the Permanent Secretary to the President and Secretary to the Cabinet.

One unanimously held view was obvious at the end of the session, and that was the urgent need for administrative reform in African public services, if they were to shoulder the expanding responsibilities were constantly growing more complex and urgent. This feeling led very naturally to the discussion about the fate and prospects of administrative reform in Africa.

Chapter 2

The Strategies and Problems of Administrative Reform in African States

MICHAEL A. BENTIL

INTRODUCTION. Having admitted the existence of a crisis in African public services, the Roundtable then tackled the problems of remedial administrative reform in Africa with a concern that made its discussion perhaps the most vigorous of all the sessions. Two papers were presented, namely: "The Futility and Frustrations of Administrative Reforms" by B.N. Nsibandze,¹ and "The Strategies and Problems of Administrative Reforms in African States" by Michael A. Bentil.²

Only Mr. Bentil's paper is presented in order to minimize repetition. This is followed by a summary of Mr. Nsibandze's paper highlighting points not included in Mr. Bentil's paper, and a summary of observations that emerged from the discussions that followed the presentations.

Different Perceptions and Approaches

The concern for a sound and effective public administration is shared by most governments in Africa irrespective of their political, economic and cultural systems. This is evidenced by the numerous and different initiatives taken from time to time by governments in the name of administration aimed at finding the proper means for making the public service more responsive to the challenging

¹ B.M. Nsibandze was then Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office and is now a Senator and Deputy Prime Minister in the Kingdom of Swaziland.

² Michael A. Bentil was formerly Deputy Director, Development Administration Division of DTCD, United Nations, New York.

demands and increasing complexities of statehood and nation-building.

Despite the concerns shown, the actual measures to effect improvements have seldom been commensurate with what was needed and possible. The efforts made hardly brought about and sustained the desired fundamental changes that could have strengthened the administrative capacity of the government. Several governments are still experiencing enormous difficulties in maintaining administrative systems capable of coping effectively with the changing needs of society. Much of the effort made is often wasted and there have been continuing frustrations. A sample of country experiences is examined below to illustrate the different types of improvement undertaken, the versatility of administrative reform measures and the difficulties encountered. The examples have been drawn largely from anglophone countries.

The Sudan Experience

In Sudan, more than six attempts at major administrative reforms have been made from time to time by different governments since 1955 which was the year of fundamental review of the administrative system preceding independence which was attained in November 1956. The concern in 1955 was focussed largely on localization ("Sudanization" process) of the civil service. Although the programme achieved some results, it did not specifically contribute to transforming the attitudes of civil servants towards their work and the public they serve. It did not also include, among its objectives, a redefinition of the objectives of the service or a systematic retraining of the new incumbents.

After the 1955 initiative, the "Terms of Service" Committee was set up during 1958-1959 and the "Staff Cadre" Committee during 1965-1968. Both committees were established to study and propose measures for the improvement of the conditions of service of government employees including their salary and allowances structure, pension system and post-employment benefits. In addition, the first and second Aburanat Committees were set up in 1956 and 1962 respectively; these examined the relationships between the central and local government administrations in Sudan.

In 1966, another commission was formed primarily to review the Government organisation, structure, processes and code of ethics and values, and to recommend valid and permanent measures for

reforming the public service. It is understood that some of the recommendations of the commission published in 1968 became part of the objectives and reform strategies of the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform created in 1971.

In addition to the use of specialized committees and commissions for the reform of the public service, the Government also applied certain institutional methods as an additional strategy. The Institute of Public Administration, for example, was established to promote training, research and consultations in management. Its programme included round-table conferences intended to bring together top civil servants and to expose them to new values and techniques of problem solving. The 'O' and 'M' unit of the Treasury was also revitalized in 1969 through extensive staff training to provide continuing management improvement services. In 1971, the unit was expanded and became the Administrative Reform Department in the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform previously mentioned. The Ministry was created as a permanent instrument for administrative reform and its main objective was to facilitate rapid national development through increased productivity and reduced costs of the public service.

In practice, these different attempts have yielded results which are, as yet, considered to be inadequate. It is felt, for instance, that the measures taken were isolated and lacking in comprehensiveness; the various committees and commissions appointed often operated without the involvement or the support of the ministries, corporations, local government units and other concerned public agencies. As a consequence, there has been no sustained strength in the process to achieve administrative improvement and development. Also, the efforts made were overly concerned with the problems of administrative niceties and were generally characterized by their patchwork methods. Very often, they ended up, as in several other countries, as makeshift exercises to adapt obsolete structures carried over from the colonial period without considering their continuing relevance and adequacy to the new and changing needs.

The Ghana Experience

In Ghana, the experience has been very similar to that of Sudan in that, since the pre-independence preparatory period in the 1950s up until the 1970s, various improvement measures were undertaken

i.e. between 1951 and 1974, there have been no less than nine different administrative reform initiatives taken in Ghana, including the following :

(a) 1950-1951—Africanisation of the public service realised by the appointment of a full-time Commission for Africanisation. The aim of this initiative was to ensure that a maximum number of suitable and qualified African candidates would become available for appointment to higher grades in the public service at the time of independence. The programme also underscored the need to develop and expand secondary, technical and higher education.

(b) 1950-1951—The Lidbury Commission was appointed, towards the latter part of 1950, following major constitutional changes providing for internal self-government, to undertake a detailed and comprehensive examination of the entire organisation of the machinery of government. The Commission was also given the task of reviewing the rates of remuneration for every grade and class of public servant. The recommendations of this commission indeed became the foundation upon which the structure of the government after independence was based. They also provided for greater utilization of the capabilities of Africans with secondary and higher education than had been possible previously.

(c) 1955—The Bourne Commission was appointed following serious political agitation and disturbances against the autocracy and rigidity of the central government administration to advise on suitable measures for devolution of powers to regional and local levels of government. The recommendation included re-definition of regional boundaries, grassroot participation and closer involvement of chiefs in public affairs through consultations. The recommendations of this commission provided the basis for the structure of the present regional organizations in Ghana.

(d) 1956—The Greenwood Commission appointed to restructure the organization of local government, define the functions and responsibilities of local authorities vis-a-vis central government and review the method of financing local authorities. The structure of the post-independence form of local government in Ghana is based on the work of this commission.

(e) 1962—The Committee on Public Service, comprised of the Economic Adviser to the government as Chairman and three senior civil servants, was appointed to inquire into the report on the organisation and methods of operation of ministries, government departments, public boards and corporations, and to recommend changes aimed at improving efficiency. At the time, it was felt that the government machinery was, in many ways, inefficient. The Commission was dissolved in 1963 after the submission of its first interim report which, apparently, was critical of the conditions that existed.

(f) 1962—A committee was created to examine the establishment structure and salaries of all grades in public boards and corporations. The committee's report was neither published nor acted upon.

(g) 1964—A civil service rules and regulations committee was appointed to revise and bring up-to-date administrative instructions more in conformity within the changes in public administration that had been taking place. The work of this committee lapsed after the change of government in 1966 and another committee was established in the same year to examine the same problem. The work of the second committee also did not yield any results; therefore, a third committee was appointed in 1970 to deal with the same task. The last effort led to a draft set of new administrative instructions, some of which were put into effect.

(h) 1967—The Mills Odoi Five-man Commission was appointed to review the structure of the public service in its entirety, including the remuneration of the staff. The recommendations of this commission brought about considerable changes such as de-concentration of administrative functions, re-organization of regional district and local administration, and a new and upgraded salary structure. In addition, the recommendations led to the creation of the Office of Government Machinery, now Management Services Division, as the permanent central agency for administration reform.

(i) 1971—The Campbell Commission was appointed to consider and make recommendations on matters concerning the salaries and fringe benefits of officers working in the public services. The aim was to enable the government to take preliminary measures towards rationalizing the salary structure in the public service and achieving a more equitable distribution of income.

(j) 1974—The Okoh Commission on the Structure and procedures of the Ghana Civil Service was formed to investigate the organisation and structure of the civil service and its methods of operation and to make recommendations for appropriate reforms needed. One of the aims was for the Commission to make recommendations that would transform the civil service into a dynamic instrument of social change and economic development. The report of the Commission was submitted in December 1976 to the government and has, as of now, not been published.

Although the different initiatives taken in Ghana have led to some sporadic improvements in the administration of the government, there has not been a sustained change since administrative problems have been approached in a piecemeal fashion. Despite the accumulation of experience gained in administrative reforms, the same problems have been recurring and have been faced by successive governments. Indeed, so persistent was the feeling of dissatisfaction with the administrative machinery of government that in 1974, the civil service itself organized, with the approval of the government, a "Civil Service Week" during July of that year in order to re-examine objectively and critically its system of operations.

The main reason for the "Civil Service Week" was to give the public, the press and the government the opportunity for an open debate and to help define the kind of services the public really wanted and how those services could be effectively rendered. In a speech to conclude the activities of the occasion, the Head of State remarked, *inter alia* that :

As a key policy and administrative instrument, the Ghana Civil Service has been the focus of many critical comments by journalists, academics and prominent members of the various regimes that have ruled this country since independence. A public institution must be constantly subjected of these comments, as I see it, is to ensure that the civil service plays an effective role in the shaping, formulation and implementation of government policy.

The Tanzania Experience

In Tanzania, the concern for fundamental changes within government administration is corroborated and epitomized by the

following declaration by President Nyerere in an address before the Tanzania African National Union (TANU) in May, 1968 :

We have to make extra efforts to improve efficiency of our administrative services in the government parastatal organizations, co-operative workers' associations . . . (many of which) leave much room to be desired . . . and the position has got worse in recent years . . .

As in the other countries previously mentioned, the government has taken a series of actions at different times since independence to effect reforms that would gear the public administration system and machinery to respond meaningfully to the growing needs brought about by the changing economic and social changes. The immediate need after the attainment of independence was to restructure the civil service which then suited only the colonial administration and also to develop a cadre of trained nationals to take over the responsibility of administering and managing the civil service, which had been manned almost exclusively by expatriate personnel.

Foreseeing the staffing problem of the public services even before independence, TANU, which had won the first elections for a representative form of government in Tanzania (then Tanganyika), made Africanisation of the civil service one of the major policies of its government. On the basis of this policy, the Tanganyika Salaries Commission, popularly known as the ADU Commission, was established in 1961. One of the major recommendations of the ADU Commission was the necessity to transform the colonial service pattern of the civil service into an indigenous service to match the independence status and to allow for rapid Africanisation, and also to make the service efficiently responsive to the new political pattern of the government.

The achievements of the "Africanisation" process have been remarkable seeing that, within 10 years (1961-1970) of the launching of the programme, the strength of Tanzanian nationals holding senior and middle-level positions in the civil service had risen from about 12% of the total establishment of the grades concerned to 90%.

The massive "Africanisation" brought along with it several problems in administration for which the government had to find suitable solutions. One of the inevitable but serious consequences of the rapid Africanisation in Tanzania, as indeed in many other

African countries, has been the lowering of standards. The threat of standards being lowered prompted the government to initiate, as part of the Second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974), an extensive training programme aimed at developing a cadre of highly competent administrative and managerial staff for the public services. Indeed, the government of Tanzania, more than any other African government since independence, has most seriously developed and encouraged the promotion of several manpower planning programmes, and has had the longest sustained experience in the diagnosis of its manpower problems.

First of all, the whole of the national educational system had to be oriented towards meeting the country's immediate manpower needs. Thus, the manpower policy, according to the Second Five-Year Development Plan, was to provide additional or further education at secondary, technical and university levels only to the extent justified by the requirements of development. In pursuance of this policy, bursaries in post-secondary education were awarded only in those cases where the skills to be acquired were relevant to economic and social development.

The next major reform measures in the area of manpower development was to create the National High Level Manpower Allocation Committee (NHLMAC) to :

- (a) determine manpower priorities of the civil service and other public sector employment;
- (b) formulate and put forward, from time to time, proposals for re-adapting the programmes of the university of Tanzania and other institutions of higher learning so that their student outputs would reflect the nation's priorities in manpower resources;
- (c) determine the fields of study and student quotas for each field; and
- (d) allocate students completing their higher education to different employments according to specific needs and relevance of their training.

The composition of NHLMAC is very high-level and, together with its authority, makes it more powerful and prestigious than the Civil Service Commission. The membership is comprised of the Principal Secretary to the President as Chairman, and other Principal

Secretaries and similarly ranked officials responsible respectively for economic affairs and development planning, finance, central personnel administration, national education and the parastatal sector.

The continuing concern for manpower development led to a proliferation of a number of public training institutions which in turn, created new problems. Particularly, there was no co-ordination between the work programme of one institution and another, and that led to unnecessary duplications and over-stretching of limited available resources. By January, 1975, there existed more than half a dozen such institutions which included the Department of Management and Administration in the University of Dar-es-Salaam; the Institute of Development Management, previously the Institute of Public Administration; the Institute of Finance Management; the Dar-es-Salaam School of Accountancy; the College of Business Education and the Co-operative College; the National Institute of Productivity; and the Civil Service Training Centre.

In 1975, the Committee on Manpower Development in Tanzania was appointed to survey the work of the existing training institutions, review the individual legislations creating them, identify further management training needs, and consider possible co-ordination and standardization of their programmes and diploma awarding systems. On the important questions of the status of the programmes and the co-ordination among them, the Committee recommended that a Public Management Development Council be established to ensure that management training programmes are properly related to the needs of the public sector. The Committee also found that the training institutions that existed were understaffed and urged that immediate steps be taken to reinforce their faculty strength. Attention was also called to the need for the role of each training institution to be clearly defined in order to optimize the utilization of its scarce resources.

Other important administrative reform activities have focussed attention on structural changes, and these have been influenced largely by political and constitutional considerations, as in many other countries. Unlike the experience in Sudan and Ghana previously discussed, most of the structural changes in the administrative machinery of the government that have taken place in Tanzania stemmed directly from the decisions of TANU, the government

party. Since the attainment of independence the government in Tanzania has become an instrument of TANU³ to entrench vividly and demonstrate party dominance. The first major step after independence to reform the government structure and its administrative machinery was taken in 1961. At the time, the political leadership faced one major task; they did not have a ready or, at least a roughly drafted administrative system which could be substituted for the inherited British system which was found not suitable to the new political, social and economic needs of the country. The government, therefore, had no choice but to adapt the old system to meet the new needs.

The second major step at structural reforms took place in 1962 when Tanzania adopted a republican constitution; the changes then were mainly confined to re-assignment of cabinet portfolios at the central level. The next major structural change took place in 1964 after the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar had taken place. Another major reason for the reform action taken was the army mutiny which took place in the same year. The significant outcome of this re-organisation was to concentrate and centralize the power of administration in the Presidency. No major structural changes in the central administration seem to have taken place until late 1975 when portfolios to the various ministries were revised. One significant change, still demonstrating the government's interest in manpower planning and development, was the creation of a new Ministry of Manpower Development to assume overall responsibility for manpower policy and planning, civil service policy, central personnel administration and management services.

In addition to the changes in the structure of the central administrative machinery, significant changes were also made in the structure of the administration at the regional and local levels. In 1963, 17 regions were created in place of the regions numbering 9 that had existed. This was intended to make administration of the regions for development to be more manageable. Later in 1972, the regional reform was reinforced by delegating more powers to each regional authority to permit it to develop and administer its programme with as little intervention as possible from the central administration. It has been difficult to realize the goals of this and

³ TANU was abolished in February 1978. Its successor is now CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi—translated literally, this means the Revolutionary Party).

previous reform actions due to the continuing scarcity of experienced and skilled personnel.

Other Experiences

Nigeria and Kenya are among the other countries where the government experience in administrative reform has been similar to that in Sudan, Ghana and Tanzania. In Nigeria, there have been at least five administrative reform commissions established at different times between 1951 and 1972. The latest and well-known one is the Udoji Public Service and Review Commission (1972-1974). The Commission addressed itself to reform measures that would enable both the federal and state governments to assume not only constructive roles in planning and administering development programmes but also in providing meaningful infrastructure and effective services that would enable the economy to grow. The major outcome of the work of this commission was a nationwide upward revision of salaries, which, it is understood, has not been cost effective.

In Kenya, there have been not less than eight commissions and other public bodies formed to undertake administrative reform assignments including three during the pre-independence period between 1949 and 1954, and five during the post-independence period between 1964 and 1976. The most well-known among these commissions is the Ndegwa Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission (1970-1971) appointed to examine the crucial issue of whether the civil service inherited at independence and modified in some respects was, in fact, well adjusted to the task of development. It had become apparent as observed by the Commission, that the civil service had remained traditional, acting essentially as a transmitter of impulses received from the cabinet. It was not geared to cope with the complexity of modern society as well as the increasing government involvement in fostering and managing development.

The Commission was required to pay special attention to the need to establish a structure and co-ordinated authority for the civil service which should meet the requirements of an effective machinery of the government. It was required also to devise suitable conditions of service for each of the public services including appropriate salary structures. It is understood that there is still room for considerable improvement in the government administration in

Kenya despite the efforts made in the past.

In addition to the Ndegwa Commission, the following are the other commissions and public bodies on administrative reform created by the government:

	<i>Reform Effort</i>	<i>Main Theme</i>
<i>Pre-independence</i>		
(i)	The Beecher Report, 1949	Development of African Education
(ii)	The Swynnerton Plan, 1954	Development of African Agriculture
(iii)	The Lidbury Commission, 1953-54	Salaries and conditions
<i>Post-independence</i>		
(iv)	The Millar-Craig Commission 1964-1965	Salaries and conditions
(v)	The Ominde Commission 1965-1966	Education Reform
(vi)	The Wamalwa Committee 1972-73	Training
(vii)	Presidential Committee on Education Reform 1975-76	Education Reform

In Kenya, as in other countries, much valuable information and data has, no doubt, been accumulated by these efforts but frustration remains in that they have not resulted in the establishment of a self-regenerating mechanism for public service reform. The quest continues for more fundamental strategies.

Common Areas of Concern and Failure

In surveying different country experiences, certain factors emerge as common reasons that have elicited the need for administrative reform. It has also emerged that, despite the various initiatives that have been taken, many problems still persist. The more crucial ones include:

(a) The unsuitability of administrative systems and structures inherited at independence. This has necessitated structural reforms embracing the entire machinery of government in order to adapt it to the new needs; in most governments, the structural change necessitated by the change of government on the attainment of inde-

pendence did not last long due to subsequent constitutional and political changes.

(b) Constitutional changes, changes of government, political pressures including agitation for decentralisation, wider representation and fuller participation in the government, the expanding role of the public sector in the economic and social development and the increasing government responsibility have all motivated governments to restructure their administrative machinery. In many cases, such changes have been limited to reassignment of functions and responsibilities to ministries and other central departments, the creation of additional government agencies and some measure of decentralization including superficial devolution of authority to local administration. The structural changes hardly made any sustained impact because the reorganisations that took place affected only some components of the public service systems. In other respects, the structural changes were limited in approach; only the civil service or one major unit of the public sector was affected although the public service is made up of different sectors.

(c) Acute shortage of trained and experienced personnel. This was exacerbated by the expanding public sector role which created the need for more and more qualified personnel. Although tremendous progress has been made to meet this need through the Africanisation policy coupled with the institution of different training programmes, most of the developing African countries, the older ones not excepted, are still experiencing acute shortages of trained personnel. For example, the Udoji Commission of Nigeria mentioned previously, observed in its main report (1974), *inter alia*, that :

Of the various problems facing public administration in Nigeria, by far the most serious is the shortage of experienced, skilled manpower. The constraint is seen in all categories and all levels of the service. From the birth of the Federation (October 1969), this has been the prime problem impeding public management.

Several reasons seem to frustrate the effort to meet the manpower needs:

(i) Lack of proper manpower planning coupled with unrealistic national educational systems which have failed to produce the skills suited to development requirements. In Ghana, for

example, from the early 1970s through the present time, the country has been facing serious problems of unemployment or under-employment of liberal arts graduates while, at the same time, it has been difficult to find suitably qualified Ghanians to fill positions in the technical and scientific fields.

(ii) Exclusion of many public employees from the benefits of public service training programmes. Participation in such programmes has been limited in most countries only to civil servants of the central government to the exclusion of other public servants such as public enterprise and public corporation employees and local government employees.

(iii) Lack of professionalism in the public service training programmes.

(iv) Uncontrolled and persisting brain drain. This issue has not been boldly tackled because it often savours of sensitive political, economic and social complexities.

(d) Unattractive salaries and poor conditions of service. Most of the reform actions taken have often been motivated by the need to revise and improve the remuneration of public servants. Yet, this problem has been recurring most of the time. One major weakness is that salary reviews have been often *ad hoc*, partial and unbalanced in approach; they have been invariably limited to the civil service while other parts of the public service system, especially the public corporations and public enterprises, have been left on their own. This lack of harmonization has, in many cases, led to glaring inequities and disparities between the pay structure of the civil service, local government and public enterprises.

(e) The tendency to belittle and sometimes to neglect the role of management problems and the management component in the implementation of development plans. This is evidenced in most countries by the exclusion of administrative planning from national plans devised for socio-economic development. In many governments, this concern is generally expressed as a mere platitude in national economic plans, presidential addresses and United Nations country programming documents.

Of the concerns listed above, those related to staffing and personnel administration seem to be more predominant in most countries. There is hardly any country in which personnel-related action has not been taken as a major concern to effect basic reforms

in the government administration. For this reason, some detailed analysis of different country experiences in that subject area is given in the section below.

Personnel and Staff Reforms as a Major Concern

Staffing the public services and related personnel administration improvements seem to have received the greatest attention in the administrative reform actions taken in different countries. Most of the structural changes and re-organizational exercises that have been undertaken in countries have failed to realize their goals due to the lack of the requisite human resources and corresponding improved personnel practices.

Because most of the developing countries inherited civil service dominated by expatriates, the major challenge concerned the replacement of those expatriates by nationals. The reform action initiated in that connection became known as the Africanisation or localisation programme. By the time of independence, almost all the countries of Africa, with a few exceptions, were heavily dependent upon expatriates manning their public services. This was the case particularly in East, Central and Southern Africa where a negligible percentage of nationals held any position of importance in the public service during the pre-independence time.

According to the Kenya manpower survey of 1969, for example, Africans held only 6.2% of the 8,000 posts classified as "senior" in the national civil service. Even in the intermediate grades where more Africans could have been employed, the proportion was equally very low—8%. Tanzania also had a similar experience. According to Government Establishment Circular Letter No. 8 of 1961, only about 12% of some 4,400 established senior and middle-grade posts in the civil service were held by Africans.

Even in the countries where there had been a longer tradition of larger employment of Africans in the civil service, the proportion of those who held senior positions before the attainment of independence was also very low. For example, in Ghana, according to the Africanisation Report of 1954, only about 14% of the senior positions in the civil service were held by Africans just before independence; out of this low proportion not more than 3% held top executive positions. Also, in Cameroon, as stated in the Second Five-Year Plan of Economic and Social Development of 1966-1971, 50% of the senior positions at the time were still held by expatriates; even

in the intermediate and technical posts, expatriates held approximately 37% and 54% respectively.

The challenge posed by Africanisation as a result of the foregoing experience was tremendous. At the same time, the progress made has been remarkable. For example, according to the survey of the high and middle manpower requirements and resources (1968), 80% to 90% of most of the key administrative positions in the government of Tanzania were held by Tanzanian nationals. In Kenya, the experience was the same; also according to the Manpower Survey and Manpower Report of 1969, between 81% and 90% of the incumbents of administrative posts were then Africans.

The rapid pace of reforms through Africanisation also led to other problems requiring more reform actions. One inevitable consequence in almost all the countries was the massive dilution of experience due to several persons being appointed to positions for which they were not sufficiently trained and lacked the requisite experience. In Tanzania, for example, according to Establishment Circular Letter No. 15 of 1968, only 18% of about 280 serving administrative officers in the senior and middle-level grades had any university degree and only about 20% had secondary education. Also, the average civil service experience of a Permanent or Principal Secretary was assessed to be about 15 years in office of which not more than 5 years had been spent in that high office. In view of this, crash training programmes had to be developed especially in the administrative fields to prepare enough nationals to replace the expatriates who were leaving the public services; others were needed to fill new key positions that were being created. The emphasis in training, at first, was to prepare officials to fill the vacuum that had been created.

In addition to the dilution of experience, there was also the problem of "promotion block" caused by the fact that most of the senior positions were being held by persons comparatively young and not due to retire for many years to come. In Ghana, this problem forced the government in 1970 to reduce the retiring age from 60 to 55 years and also to introduce an option for voluntary retirement at 50 years.

Another major personnel problem experienced in most of the countries has been caused by the rapid expansion of the public services which led to enlarged civil service establishments. In Tanzania, for example, the size of the civil service more than

doubled from 34,600 in 1960-1961 to over 75,000 in 1970-1971. In addition, the number of state employees in parastatal organisations rose by more than 130% in three years from 26,600 in 1967 to 62,000 in 1970 (Economic Survey of Tanzania, 1970-1971). Also, in Nigeria, the total establishments for all the civil services increased by about 60% during the first six years of independence according to the Federal Public Service Commission Annual Reports for 1961 and 1966 and the statistical reports of some of the state governments (1968). A related concern has been the cost impact of the size of the civil service. For example, the Tanganyika Salaries (ADU) Commission, 1961, previously mentioned, felt that the country's civil service as a whole, particularly that embracing the senior ranks, was too large for the country's economy. It was estimated that the cost of personnel emoluments at that time was approximately 41% of the total government expenditure. By the same token, the Cameroon Third Economic Plan set a limit on the annual increase in the number of civil servants to 6%. This problem repeats itself in several other countries.

To cope with the problems arising from the rapid expansion of the public services as well as the challenges posed by the Africanisation policy coupled with the exodus of expatriate staff, governments had to reform their personnel practices based upon improved recruitment methods, merit systems in career development and better conditions of employment. In addition, during the first decade after independence and, in many cases, long thereafter, almost each government embarked upon massive training programmes especially in the administrative, clerical and secretarial fields. Civil service training schools and institutes of public administration mushroomed in many countries at the time. By August 1977, there were more than 50 public service training institutions in some 38 developing African countries including as many as 6 in Nigeria and 3 each in Ghana and Tanzania.

Another reform effort in the area of personnel administration common to almost all the countries has been to review the salaries and emoluments of public employees and to improve personnel practices in order to attract and retain better qualified individuals in them. This is true of many of the civil service review commissions that have been established in Ghana such as the Lidbury Commission of 1950-1951, the Mills Odoi Commission of 1967, the Campbell Commission on salary structure, 1971, and the Issufu Ali

Committee on Wages and Salaries, 1976-1977. Also, in Nigeria, the Mbanefo Commission of 1959, the Morgan Commission of 1964, the Elwood Grading Team of 1966, the Adebo Commission of 1971 and, most recently, the Udoji Commission of 1972-1974 were all concerned with civil service salaries and wages and related personnel and administration procedures. The Ndegwa Commission of Kenya, 1970, also dealt with remuneration and salary grading system in the public services as with the organisation and structure of the services, substantially.

One other area of additional concern in personnel reforms is how to establish and maintain a proper balance in the establishment ratios between senior staff establishment and middle-management staff establishment. The experience in many countries is that the staffing strength at the middle and supervisory level has not been adequate to give the right support to the officials holding top-level positions. In other cases, the experience is that the number of middle-level personnel has been too thin to enable an effective supervision of the staff below that level.

Other personnel-related concerns have stemmed from the consideration as to which agency or agencies should exercise the central personnel functions and also the extent of their duties, responsibilities and powers. It is common to find in many countries the central responsibility for personnel matters being shared by two agencies:

- (a) the Establishment or Central Personnel Office; and
- (b) the Public Service(s) Commission.

The former agency is normally responsible for position classification and salary structuring, staff complements, and personnel rules and regulations. On the other hand, Public Service(s) Commission is generally responsible for recruitment, appointments, promotions and disciplinary matters. In some countries, it has been contended that only one agency should exercise the central role with sufficient powers being delegated to departments to deal directly with matters of immediate and basic concern to them. It can be said that the sharing of personnel responsibilities by the different agencies has often led to conflicts, part of which have induced administration reform actions.

Constraints to Administrative Reform

The need for administrative reform has been conceded and given some degree of attention over the years in several developing countries since the advent of independence. Nevertheless, much of the effort to bring about reforms, as revealed by the foregoing analysis, has been isolated and has lacked in comprehensiveness. In general, administrative reform has not been tackled as part of the socio-economic development process. There has been a lack of comprehensiveness because the studies that were undertaken were generally limited to only a sector or part of the public service system. For example, the review of civil services which has been very common among many countries is a limited approach considering the broader dimensions and needs of the public service in each country.

A more comprehensive and meaningful outlook would be to include in such reviews, for example, the problems of local government and public enterprises administration. Instead, the problems of local government and public enterprises are often treated as if they have no relationship with those of the central government. One reason why local government administration has been ineffective is the negative attitude of the officials in the ministries and other central government departments responsible for local government.

Another constraint is that, in a number of cases, the efforts made towards administrative reform or changes in the civil service were politically motivated and were geared to satisfy partisan or individual rather than the overall national interests. By the same token, other reform activities were motivated largely by intellectual aspirations which were destined to fail to realize the desired objectives either because they lacked practical and other operational relevance or because they lacked the necessary machinery and authority for implementation. It is no surprise, therefore, that in a number of cases, research findings and recommendations in the area of administrative reform were, if not dismissed, merely acknowledged as intellectual exercises.

One other major constraint is the failure to integrate administrative reform with socio-economic development. Most national development plans seldom include any meaningful programme on administrative reform although sound administration is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of development plans. This neglect may be due, in part, to the lack of perception on the part

of top administrators of the real purpose of administrative reform. Most of these administrators are generalists who are oblivious to the new tasks of public servants in rapidly changing societies which require special skills and aptitudes that are only attainable through specialized training and qualifications. Consequently, professionalism among the top administrators has not been encouraged.

This lack of professionalism in administration is indeed another major constraint in the way of major administrative reforms in most African countries. It has denied administrative reform the necessary disciplined and systematic approach from which other activities, technically and professionally handled, have gained substantial benefits. Administrative reform has, in general, been handled by administrators who still believe in "muddling through" with what they do.

The next common major constraint is the lack of institutional support. Many administrative reforms which have been introduced with fanfare have been short-lived due to the lack of adequate and sustained institutional support. Enthusiasm shared by a few is not enough to support reform initiatives. There must be a built-in institutional mechanism to ensure that the reforms shall be put into effect and that the implementation action would be kept under close and continuous surveillance. Most administrative reform programmes have failed to attain the necessary institutional support and stability because, initially, they were ill-conceived, lacked clearly-defined objectives and were not properly planned. Equally lacking have been the right leadership, proper direction, organization-wide collaboration due to the indifferent attitudes towards reforms and, most crucially, the requisite staff resources.

Lastly, there is insufficient public support for reform. In almost all the countries in Africa, informed public opinion is not sufficiently articulated to provoke general interest in administrative reform. There is scarcely any organized movement in favour of administrative reform in most of these countries. No doubt, there have been scattered public concern for and interest in improved efficiency, and higher standards of administrative performance but those responsible invariably did not know how to make their demands felt or what practical steps they should take. Their efforts were largely sporadic, isolated and unco-ordinated. In any case, in some countries, public criticism of the administration is either not encouraged or entertained.

Need for Better Approach

In the light of the constraints that have been identified above as well as the difficulties that governments continue to face in strengthening their administration, one is still left with the question of what strategies would ensure successful administrative reform actions in developing African countries. To answer this question, the following measures distilled from different country experiences are proposed for consideration and adaptation as may be applicable :

(a) There is need to foster an environment favourable to reform facilitated by the right political, social and administrative climate which is derived from an awareness of the urgency for administrative reform. In order to develop this awareness, it may be necessary to embark upon a programme of education to explain the rationale of administrative reform to all responsible public officials including legislators, ministers and senior government officials. This approach was once applied with considerable success in Ghana in 1970 when new measures for reforming the public services recommended by the Mills Odoi Commission of 1967 were being implemented. It involved ministers, regional commissioners and deputy ministers. In this context, it is also worth noting the Kenya government's concern for sustained administrative reform as demonstrated by resolutions adopted at the national conference on the "Kenya We Want" in February 1978 attended by Ministers, Assistant Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Provincial Commissioners and Members of Parliament.

(b) With a general awareness of the significance of administrative reform developed, a high-level commission should be appointed from time to time by the government to undertake a comprehensive review of the public services, to identify major administrative deficiencies and to advise on the appropriate reform measures to be taken. The frequency of setting up such administrative reform committees would depend upon the trend of changes taking place in the government as well as changing public demands. The membership of the committee to be appointed at any time should provide for the full representation of all interests and their participation in order to establish a wider base for the reform programmes that may be developed. The wider representation, the more likely would the support for the programme. The different national activities, in respect of which the committee membership should reflect wide representation, should include policy formulation at the political

level, different levels and sectors of programmes execution in the government, private business and industrial sectors, academic and training institutions, labour organizations and the press.

(c) Based upon the advice to be given by the committee proposed in (b) above and its acceptance or modifications by the government comprehensive plans and programmes for administrative reform should be developed. The planning methods to be applied should follow, as far as practicable, the techniques for economic planning to comprehend, for example, perspective or long-term, medium-term and short-term or annual plans. While comprehensive administrative reform plans are advocated, it is equally important that the programmes that are developed for implementation are not over-ambitious, bearing in mind the limited administrative capability of most countries. The plans must be flexible and easy to implement. Experience has shown that global approach to administrative reforms is hardly ever successful unless it is phased realistically for implementation.

(d) The administrative reform plan to be developed, as proposed in (c) above, should be integrated with the national socio-economic plan and it must be consistent with the overall development programmes.

(e) In order to ensure that administrative reform programmes are properly implemented, a permanent machinery comprehending a network of implementing organs in the different sectors, departments and levels of government should be established. This network should have at the hub a central government agency that would co-ordinate, monitor, evaluate and follow-up on the implementation actions that have to be undertaken by the different agencies within the network. Such a network hardly exists in most developing countries. In several countries, the Organisation and Methods Institution is utilized as the main instrument for implementing government-wide administrative reforms. The Office of Organisation and Methods in the Presidency of the Republic of Senegal and the Central Office of 'O' and 'M' in Cameroon are two examples of the approach. In other cases, institutes or schools of public administration are used as in the case of the Somali Institute of Development and the Ethiopian Institute of Public Administration. A more recent and seemingly effective instrument has been a cabinet-level department with some degree of external linkages such as the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform in

Sudan and the Office of Government Machinery, now Management Services Division of the Office of Supreme Military Council in Ghana.

(f) As a corollary to (e) above, administrative reform programmes should be aimed at evolving a system of public administration that will have a built-in and self-generating mechanism for performance improvement. In this regard, it is important that the reform measures should promote and motivate self-appraisal of one's performance rather than the traditional management-imposed appraisal. One way to achieve this is for the government organisation to be viewed as an interdependent living organism that must be adaptive to its environment, both internally and externally. Thus, public administration must be seen not only in the context of a formal static structure but as a living, flexible network of relationships among people, designed to achieve socially meaningful goals. A concrete experience in this respect is that of "Programming for Improved Performance" (United Nations Publication, ST/ESA/SER. E/9) which involves people working together in an exercise of problem identification and solution through joint programming. The approach has the advantage of ensuring commitment to the improvement measures. It is also important that the public service system must be oriented towards the future and not so much on the past experience which may no longer be relevant to new kinds of problems that cannot be always anticipated.

(g) Substantively, administrative reform programmes must be limited not only to the re-organisation of the machinery of government, changes in staffing and salary structures and to training but also to other appropriate areas of administrative, economic and socio-cultural activities aimed at the improvement of public administration performance. It is especially important that administrative reform strategies should include plans to study and identify emerging modern management techniques that are most suited to local conditions in the overall context of macro and micro development.

(h) Lastly, administrative reform programmes must encompass suitable staff development components that would ensure an adequate and regular supply of sufficiently trained and motivated staff to support the actions that are carried out both centrally and departmentally. As far as practicable, wage and salary reviews should be excluded from administrative reform programmes since the

objectives of the latter are different from those of the former. On the other hand, all structural reform exercises must be complemented by personnel and staffing readjustments since organization structures by themselves are meaningless unless they are activated by the people manning them as well as their skills and ability, their attitudes to work, adaptability, imagination, loyalty and other qualities which spell either success or failure.

It would be unrealistic for one to assume that the measures outlined above are ideal solutions to all the problems of administration reform in developing countries. This is a far-fetched hope since administrative problems are situational being contingent upon changing political, social, cultural, economic and technological circumstances. The proposals are intended only as a checklist to guide action towards the development of meaningful administrative reform programmes and their execution. The emphasis is the need to establish a permanent mechanism that would ensure sustained and continuing monitoring of the changing national priorities and the kind of reform actions that can satisfy them. The few countries that have adopted that approach have had no regrets.

Concluding Remarks

Whereas the 1950s and 1960s marked the era of independence, rapid changes in political and administrative systems, and the Africanisation of the public services through diverse training programmes, the 1970s, and, particularly, the 1980s may well be identified as the period of re-appraisal and administrative reform and improvements. Only a few countries have embarked upon systematic reforms and, even in those few cases, most of the measures adopted have tended to be reactive to situations rather than being predetermined, well thought-out actions against anticipated administrative problems.

Most of the past administrative reform actions have been characterized by "fire-fighting" techniques that created more problems than solutions. There has been little indication that the reforms proposed formed part of well-conceived, long range perspective plans and programmes that covered all aspects of the administrative machinery of the government. Thus, the challenges of the 1980s would be for governments to anticipate needs that are likely to emerge from the continuing political, social, economic technological and administrative changes and to develop systematic reform

programmes that would make their administrative systems meaningful and more responsive to the national development goals and popular demands.

SUMMARY OF PAPER PREPARED BY MR B.M. NSIBANDZE

Mr. Nsibandze in his short paper briefly discussed the impelling and impeding forces to administrative reform and suggested some remedies and approaches to facilitate reforms. Among the impelling forces he mentioned :

- (a) the continuously changing and expanding responsibilities from colonial to development administration and nation-building;
- (b) the widening gap between planned goals and expectations; and the poor implementation and delivery of results; and
- (c) the growing dissatisfaction of the populace, the politicians and public servants alike about the state of the existing services.

In his opinion the impeding forces were:

- (a) the scarcity of suitable manpower to smoothly effect reforms;
- (b) the attitudes of the politicians, and especially, top public servants, which can be summed up as "better the devil you know than the angel you do not", who therefore continue operating defective systems rather than attempt changing them;
- (c) the high cost of reform measure both in terms of money and trained personnel;
- (d) the common tendency of combining salary reviews with other reform measures, resulting in attendance to the salaries recommendations and neglect of reforms and other measures;
- (e) lack of commitment to reform.

Finally, Mr. Nsibandze recommended an approach which he hoped would facilitate better results from administrative reform effort. He recommended that :

- (a) intentions to carry out reform should be publicised and support for them ensured;

- (b) the whole exercise should be planned, including budgeting for, phasing the execution of approved reform measures, and the establishment of a machinery to co-ordinate, direct and monitor the implementation;
- (c) the separation of salary review from administrative reform commissions; and
- (d) lastly, he warned against expecting miracles!

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the discussions that ensued and which was spearheaded by appointed discussants, Mrs. F.Y. Emanuel⁴ and Mr. Abdul Karim⁵, and vigorously contributed to by all participants, various points were made which are briefly presented below.

Early in the discussion a spirited attempt was made to put all, or most of the blame for the failure of attempts at administrative reform on the politicians and the prevailing political situation in Africa. It was argued that politicians were to blame because on the whole they had failed to adopt definite and stable political and socio-economic goals around which they could remould their public services which implemented their policies. Instead there were constant changes of direction, emphasis, ideologies, forms and types of government and government structures, all of which made administrative reform very difficult to conceptualise. The argument went on to say that the political leaders, as policy and decision-makers, had failed to realize the vital importance of changing, reforming and revitalising their most important tool in implementing their policies (the public services) and to adapt them to the changed and changing tasks in introducing successful administrative reforms. It was suggested that every effort be made to convince the political leaders of the importance of the public services as an instrument of policy. It was only then that appropriate decisions could be generated to effect meaningful and sustained reform effort.

That submission was immediately strongly countered by an

⁴ Mrs. F.Y. Emanuel was then the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Establishments, Nigeria. She is now the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Health.

⁵ Mr. Abdul Karim is Permanent Secretary to the President and Head of Civil Service, Sierra Leone.

impassioned argument putting the blame on the public service, especially the top public servants. It was no use, the argument went, to blame politicians who were in any case not professional administrators or managers, and who were therefore not versed in the complexities of suitable alternative approaches and improvements. Top civil servants have always resented political intervention in the way the public services performed their duties terming it 'ignorant interference'! How come now they were being blamed for not interfering enough to effect reform? Because of their training and expertise it was the responsibility of the administrators and managers to know that the machinery and tools they were using to execute their new tasks and responsibilities were no longer suitable, and to devise ways and means, and in what fashion, they should be changed. Top public servants were recognized policy-makers and could not excuse themselves by pleading inability to initiate policy in respect of administrative reform, it was further argued.

It is a fact that top public servants have been known to have been the toughest impediment to reform measures. Their resistance or non-co-operation has frustrated many potentially effective reform efforts. Top public servants were either too lazy and apathetic about administrative reform, or they were equally, if not more, ignorant than the politicians about it! It was the top public servants who drafted the terms of reference of administrative reform commissions; they served on these commissions; they provided data to the commissions, they drafted the resultant 'white papers' and they were responsible for executing the agreed recommendations; and in all these stages they generally have a very negative approach. In conclusion, an appeal was made to participants to stop shunning their responsibilities and to tackle their failure in bringing about administrative reform through candid and objective self-appraisal of their vital role.

Continuous political instability and excessive mobility and transfers of top-level public servants and ministers were given as a reason for the relative failure in administrative reform efforts. It was argued that excessive instability had bred such insecurity among the public servants, that they had lost confidence in initiating bold policies. This loss of confidence, combined with an absence of reasonable continuity in their posts due to too frequent transfers, had all but stifled any serious thought-out administrative reform. It was argued that a few countries like Tanzania where there had been

appreciable reforms, had at least had a certain amount of relative political stability.

The opponents to this point of view, however, pointed out that that sort of instability was not confined to Africa alone. They quoted France as having in fact been run by its public services for decades, to which argument the other side retorted that so had many African public services to their great credit, seeing that they had not had as long an experience and such long established traditions as the French public service. The argument continued, however, that the fact that African public services had run services in times of continuous crisis was not to say that such a situation was conducive to reform initiative.

Eventually, a consensus emerged that whereas politicians and political situations had their share of the blame for the poor performance of administrative reform measures, African public services must bear the greater portion of the blame because they were the expert administrators and managers, and were, or should be more conversant with, and knowledgeable about, the problems and intricacies of administrative reform. It was therefore well and truly incumbent upon public servants to spearhead administrative reform.

It was this consensus that in the final session led to the most important outcome of the Round-table; namely, that African public servants, through AAPAM and other such similar organisations should go further than annually identifying and discussing problems. They should endeavour to come out with concrete practical proposals as to how to bring about specific reform measures; that it was time for African public servants to start playing a much more positive role than they had hitherto done. Many other points were made in the discussions among which the following are noteworthy,

The Round-table generally agreed with the proposals for a new approach to administrative reform as advocated in the two papers especially, as set out in the last pages of Mr. Benti's paper. The discussion then shifted to the practicality of the advocated "new approach".

Questions were raised to the effect that, given that it is the duty of public servants to spearhead administrative reform and that, to start with, a favourable environment must be created through converting and involving all "responsible public officials, including legislators, ministers and senior government officials", how do you generate

enthusiasm in dispirited public servants who probably have no effective leadership? How do you convince some of Africa's military governments to join a discussion with their public servants about the type and quality of services needed by the country, or for that matter, civilian politicians whose nature one of the authors had described as incapable of being "changed by even revolutions"? How do you convince governments which usually take their public services for granted, that they must accord higher priority to public service reform than to a visible prestigious project they can always point to as an achievement?

Some participants thought that such questions were pessimistic. They argued that some military governments realized or ought to easily realize that public services were their most important tools in achieving their goals, whatever they were! They quoted a military regime in Ghana which introduced some of the most far reaching administrative reforms in Ghana through appointing the Mills-Odoi Commission, and which commenced on very effective implementation although it did not finalize the implementation programme because they had to hand over to a civilian government. They argued that even where recognized official public service leadership was in itself weak or ineffective, individual behind-the-scenes initiative could have an effect. They argued that such programmes as P.I.P. could be started in a ministry through individual initiative and could catch on. Forms like the regular Permanent Secretaries' meetings could play the initiating focal point. AAPAM was eminently suited to foster positive action being taken on a regional basis.

In the end a fairly general consensus was arrived at to the effect that in the Africa of the 1980s and probably beyond, a truly devoted public servant inevitably had in some ways to play the role of a missionary and propagate the gospel of effective and relevant administrative reform, if Africa was to achieve the much needed socio-economic development and develop into strong united independent states. AAPAM had a primary role in this missionary work and had to arrange many more such Round-tables.

Because of the multi-dimensional constraints encountered by the African governments in strengthening various areas of their public administration machinery, one question of crucial importance is what effective strategies and methods are to be devised and adopted in ensuring that meaningful reforms take place in African administrations for the 1980s. It has already been said that priority should be

given to the creation of an environment favourable to administrative reforms within the context of their right political, economic, and social climate. To create this environment, it may be necessary, inter alia, to embark upon programmes of education to explain the rationale of administrative reform to all responsible public officials including legislators, ministers and their senior public officials. Colloratory to this, the African governments may consider the possibility of establishing high-level committees to undertake periodically a comprehensive review of various aspects of the public service, identifying major administrative weaknesses and to advise on appropriate corrective measures.

It is also important that comprehensive plans and programmes for administrative reforms should be developed. The planning methods to be applied should follow, as far as practicable, the techniques for economic planning for example, the use of long-term, medium-term, short-term or annual plans. Such administrative reform plans, as are referred to in the foregoing, should be integrated into the national socio-economic plans and should be consistent with overall development programmes.

It is important that consideration should be given to the creation of a permanent machinery comprising a network of implementing organs in the different sectors, departments and levels of government to ensure that administrative reform programmes are being effectively and properly implemented.

Administrative reform programmes must also encompass suitable staff development components that would ensure a regular supply of adequately trained and genuinely motivated staff to support the actions that are carried out both centrally and departmentally. On the other hand, structural reform exercise must be complimented by personnel and staff re-adjustments since organisation structures by themselves are meaningless unless they are activated by the people manning them as well as their skills and ability, their attitude to work, adaptability, imagination, loyalty and such other commendable administrative qualities.

In concluding this chapter, it is important to note that in the light of the foregoing observations, African States are confronted by an enormous task of devising and evolving pragmatically effective methods and techniques in their now highly-specialized area of public administration that will enable them to meet the challenges of the '80s in the most rational, consistent and efficient manner so that

the administrative reforms and improvements which should be embarked upon in the '80s would be geared towards the effective implementation of the development programmes and ultimate realization of multi-faceted goals, coupled with the maximum utilization of available manpower and other resources to obtain the desired optimum development objectives.

The Challenges of the 1980s

INTRODUCTION. After concluding that African public services have had to cope with greatly changed and vastly expanded tasks and responsibilities whose complexities were growing every passing year, and that the efforts taken to reform and to equip these services and enable them to cope with new challenges had not been sufficiently successful, the analysis and discussions on the challenges of the 1980s only served to emphasise the urgency and the need for priority being accorded to the improvement of the effectiveness of these services which were now working under considerable stress and strains and lacking considerable capabilities.

For this session three papers were presented. They were:

1. "Challenges of the 1980s for African Public Services" by Dr. Galobawi M. Salih.¹
2. "The Challenges of the 1980 for African Public Services" by the Secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
3. "The Challenge of the 1980s for African Public Services: The Relevance of Trends in the International Service" by Norman A. Graham² and Davidson Nicol.³

Dr. Salih's and the UNECA Secretariat papers addressed themselves to the challenges of the 1980s to African public services as they saw them. They both argued that a considerable part of the challenges constitutes a spill-over of the unresolved challenges of the two post-independence decades and they

¹ Dr. Galobawi M. Salih was then, Acting Director-General of CAFRAD. He is Under Secretary and Dean of the Public Service, Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform, Sudan.

² Norman A. Graham is a senior officer with United National Institute of Training and Research, New York.

³ Dr. Davidson Nicol is the Executive Director of United Nations Institute of Training and Research, New York.

therefore, started by reviewing the challenges of these two decades. This inevitably caused a certain amount of repetition of areas already covered in Chapters 1 and 2.

The third paper compared the problems of international public services in the 1980s with those of African public services and highlighted their relevance.

The UNECA Secretariat paper is presented in full whilst the other two are summarised together with the resultant discussions.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1980S FOR AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICES

The Secretariat of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

The challenges inherent in independence fall into two broad categories: nation-building and development. These categories represent, however, broad goals, the attainment of which can only be realized by several decades of hard and systematic work. On the surface, these goals may seem simple to attain since they appear to be mutually reinforcing; but the real difficulty arises when dealing with their subsidiaries which are often as contradictory as they are apparently irreconcilable. For instance, maintenance of national unity may require the accommodation of ethnic interests which may be detrimental to economic development.

Past as well as current events in many parts of the continent have proved beyond doubt the vulnerability of many African countries to disintegration. The heterogenous and often conflicting ethnic groups of which these nations are constituted had been held together prior to independence not by social, cultural, linguistic or economic factors but by colonial rule alone; and successive post-independence governments have not fully succeeded in consummating this fragile unity. The most formidable challenge to African governments remains, therefore, the cementing together of the various ethnic groups of their respective conditions which will strongly bind them together and inculcate in them a feeling that they belong to one and the same nation. This means that African governments must first and foremost integrate their societies.

The path to integration is long and prickly and therefore, governments who are travelling on it have to be very careful and must calculate each step before taking it. The Chinese say that "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step". After two decades of

independence it is still doubtful whether the majority of African governments have taken the first step on the path to national integration. Many African nations are still likely to fall apart as they were at independence. In Zaire, for instance, the secessionist movement that broke out in Katanga (now Shaba Province) in 1960 took many years to quell, it sprang up again after seventeen years and Zaire's unity was saved only with the help of foreign forces. In 1978, the same secessionist and internecine struggle erupted again and the unity of Zaire was again saved not by mustering internal strengths but by resorting to foreign military intervention. Ethiopia has been similarly plagued by a secessionist movement which broke out in Eritrea in 1961 and has been gathering momentum ever since with the result that the province seems to be again on the verge of secession and the Ethiopian government is mobilizing its military resource with some external support in an attempt to defeat the secessionists. Besides these two examples there are other African governments which are faced with disintegrative forces and which need to take the necessary economic, social and political measures to defeat such forces.

As evidenced by the situation in Shaba Province of Zaire, military solutions are only temporary and African governments should realise that it is costly in terms of human lives, money, destruction of property and foreign intervention to keep the multifarious ethnic groups of their nations together by force of arms. Lasting solutions of the root problems lie in the pursuit of productive economic and social policies and in the ability to use political skills to deal with dangerous cleavages. This is where development reinforces nation-building. The recent Paris conference on the Zaire situation emphasized the dire need for political economic solutions which include adequate attention to the economic, social and political needs of the affected area. There was equal emphasis on the need to bring about administrative reforms in order to facilitate the tackling of Zaire's economic and administrative problems. Here then, is a vivid example where public services need to be reshaped in order to play a vital role in strengthening the unity of a nation, thereby saving it from the holocaust of violent disintegration.

This paper attempts to do three things :

- (a) to identify the challenge of the 1980s facing African public services and to explain the nature of this challenge;

- (b) to examine whether the present capabilities of African public services enable them to meet the challenge; and
- (c) to make suggestions to the more difficult question of what can be done to prepare African public services for meeting the challenge. Needless to say that the overall purpose of the Paper is to provoke discussion on the future role of African public services.

The 1980s are just round the corner. It may therefore be reasonably expected that the present issues and problems will spill over into the 1980s. The paper therefore tries to review the challenges of the past (those of the sixties and seventies) and to see whether they have been met or not; it arrives at the conclusion that they have not at all been met and that they will increase in magnitude and complexity only to confront the African public services in the 1980s.

In Africa, the task of predicting future events is a very difficult one mainly because of the kaleidoscopic and sudden unplanned changes that occur in the continent all the time. The nature of these changes vary from the government inspired to others that are brought about by external factors. Some economic crises in Africa can be attributed to the economic conditions prevailing in Europe and America. Any person venturing to predict future events in Africa is confronted with a number of uncertainties. There is the uncertain economic situation and the resultant but unpredictable political and social upheavals; there are ecological imbalances resulting in drought and famine, and the uncertainties in future international relations which may be precipitated by eruptions of border and territorial conflicts. There are also uncertainties as to whether government and individual public servants will remain committed to economic development for a long period. Finally, there are uncertainties that are brought about by cataclysmic events, such as revolutions, which lead to the purging of public servants as well as military personnel, an act which is very harmful since it removes a large proportion of highly trained and experienced staff from the public services. Therefore, the challenges of the 1980s must be identified in the light of past and current events as well as new dimensions in the future development and implications of these events.

Review of the First Two Decades of Independence

The early years of independence were largely spent on the euphoria that was the sequel to independence. Then the process of Africanisation which was necessary to complete the transfer of power to the Africans took so many years since it proved to be a difficult one; there were not many technically and professionally qualified Africans to replace the expatriate officers who were manning the machinery of government. But rapid Africanisation had nevertheless to continue at the cost of lowering standards in the public service which could not but have adverse consequences. The consequences varied from one country to another depending on the country's stage of educational, economic and political development at the time of independence. Africanisation set the stage also for political appointments and thereby encouraged the resurgence of tribal sentiments.

In the meantime, popular pressures for economic development were building up and could no longer be ignored; this was one of the promises of independence and the need to respond to economic challenges was obvious. Ambitious plans of economic development were formulated mainly by indigenous economists who are still fresh from the universities and who had little or no practical experience in public administration and the development process and also by expatriate experts who knew little about the country. The sixties were a period in which the relevance of social and political factors to economic development was not clearly perceived. Hence the advent of the economists who were thought to have immediately applicable remedies to economic backwardness. However, such plans as were formulated inevitably failed and the post-mortem examinations showed that their failure was due to a number of factors:

- (a) the plans were highly ambitious and aimed at targets which were difficult to achieve;
- (b) they did not take into account the modest resources of the country, both human and material;
- (c) no reforms in government structures were made to facilitate the implementation of the plans;
- (d) planning and implementation were treated as two separate processes; there were no effective communication links between those who formulated the plans and those who were expected to

carry out plans were unable to understand its language and did not appreciate its targets, with the result that they simply shelved the plans away;

(e) there were serious discrepancies between plan targets and local priorities and so the plans failed to get local support; and therefore;

(f) there was no effective co-ordination machinery at the national and the Ministry of Planning was unable to command the respect and confidence of the other ministries with which it appeared to be competing for power;

(g) similarly, the planning commission was unable to control ministries and to compel them to conform to plan requirements;

(h) lack of harmonization between planning and budgeting and the failure to use the annual budget as an instrument for carrying out the plan targets for the year;

(i) lack of appreciation of the political and social realities in the country with the result that; as in some cases, bargaining between politicians had to take place sometimes after plans had been drawn up and projects not in the plan were subsequently budgeted for and executed thereby upsetting planned priorities and resource use;

(j) the intellectual gap between planners and politicians on the one hand and planners and the masses for whom they had planned on the other hand; finally;

(k) development plans were, at least in a number of cases, drawn up on the basis of anticipated foreign aid which in some cases never materialised.

Plans and administrative reforms have been interrupted or occasioned by changes in government which arose from instability. The result was that plans were seldom allowed to run their full course and thereby prove their worth. Each government that came to power had its own targets and priorities in mind which did not necessarily coincide with those of the previous government; each government was reluctant to carry out the development programmes of its predecessor lest it was accused of not having ideas of its own. Of course some programmes had gone a long way in their implementation could not be halted and cancelled. This instability adversely affected the public services in many ways. First, it confused the public servants as to what priorities they should carry out. Secondly,

changes in government were highly disruptive in that public servants had to deal with different ministers each time. Thirdly, the changes sometimes involved political appointments in the public services as well as premature promotions and retirements, especially in those countries which did not have very strong public service traditions. Fourthly, cabinet changes encouraged ethnic competition and thereby caused resurgence of tribalism.

The seventies came with the same challenges but called for new approaches to the old issues and problems that were faced in the sixties. The nature of the problems was such that they could not be solved in one decade. The first decade, however, was one in which some of the early analyses of Africa's performance in development have led to the conclusion that the continent has gone astray.⁴ It can be said that in the first decade, African countries were learning their lessons in development although the problems that posed the challenge to the public services cannot be neatly divided between the first and the second decades. The seventies can be said to be an era of new approaches to old problems. There were new approaches to planning and an attempt to avoid past mistakes. There was a reasonable correlation between the resources available and the objectives to be attained. In an attempt to inject an element of realism in planning the plan periods were made shorter and plan objectives were based, at least partially, on local wishes. Furthermore, it transpired that the so-called 'rural obduracy' was mainly due to extension workers not being able to put across new ideas to rural communities rather than the latter being reluctant to absorb them; it has been proved that rural communities are amenable to innovations if the practical utility of these innovations can be physically demonstrated. So the challenges to the extension worker is the establishment of effective communication so that he can convince his rural partners in development to use new and more productive methods. The implications of this for training is that the extensions worker must, besides his technical subject, be equipped with the necessary communication skills to enable him put across his message to the farmers.

On the administrative side, several reform measures have been

⁴ See for example, Rene Dumont, *False Start in Africa*, Frederick A. Praeger, N.Y. 1966. Although this book applies largely to French-speaking Africa there is a chapter on the English-speaking countries in Africa which comes to similar conclusions.

recommended and adopted. Reform commissions have been set up in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, the Sudan and Tanzania and these commissions dealt with various aspects of the public services. As with planning there was also a great deal of debate and literature on administrative reform especially on its definition, scope and purpose and, as usual, past mistakes which accounted for the failure of administrative reforms were identified. The failure was blamed on imprecise goals; on undue preoccupation with structural changes; on neglecting the human aspect of organisations; on limiting the reforms to central departments; on overestimating the capabilities of public servants; on the lack of institutional machinery to oversee and coordinate the implementation of reform measures; and, above all, on the lack of continued commitment by politicians and a dropping of enthusiasm on the part of the public servants. An area where reform measures have conspicuously failed is local government. National issues and problems have eclipsed the need for local government reforms. Many governments have tried to introduce 'reforms' in this area but most of these reforms have been half-hearted because of the central government's unwillingness to transfer some of its authority and resources to local councils. The glaring need for the devolution of important development functions to local councils is recognized but central authorities usually withhold power from local councils on grounds that the local councillor is ignorant and corrupt. Even central government departments in the field have little delegated authority to exercise. The result is the lamentable absence of genuine decentralisation.

Another problem which has been partially attended to but was not tackled properly is training. Like planning and administrative reforms it was not recognized in the sixties that training was essential for enhancing the capabilities of public servants. Accordingly, many training institutions were established, the most prominent ones being the institutes of public administration and/or Management, the majority of which were sponsored by the United Nations, at least in their early years. Some of these institutes have become very ineffective, mainly for reasons which stem from government policy. However, the main fault of these institutes was that their lecturers were usually young and inexperienced and therefore a large number of staff in the middle and upper echelons of the civil service did not look to them for relevant expertise and thought there was nothing they could learn from them. The other main factor which also

accounted for the ineffectiveness of these institutes was that government policy did not favour training; for example, vertical mobility seldom came as a direct consequence of training. The original idea behind the establishment of these institutes was to produce trained administrators and managers, in order to alleviate the deleterious effects of Africanisation. The institutes were expected not only to train existing administrative and managerial staff but also to produce new cadres who would then gather experience as they ascend the organisational ladder so that they would have enough experience and professional background by the time they are called upon to take over from retiring senior managers and administrators. The universities have taken upon themselves the task of providing administrative training in a genuine attempt to mitigate the difficulties arising from the shortage of trained manpower. They have also established Institutes of Public Administration and/or of Management or of Development Studies. But they have been often criticized for adopting too academic an approach to highly practical subjects such as management and public administration. All this is nevertheless a healthy indication that, provided these efforts continue and improve, training will be successful in alleviating serious shortages in manpower.

The Challenges of the 1980s

Most of the challenges of the 1980s will be inherited from the seventies, the seventies themselves having inherited them from the sixties. The issue and problems that stood out prominently immediately after independence were too great for the young African nations to cope with in a matter of one decade or two. But, they may not present themselves in exactly the same form and intensity in the 1980s. The problems will be more pressing and public demands for more and better services will be more clamorous. In the event, the politicians may become even more impatient than they had been in the sixties and seventies for their want of speedy development, and may, accordingly press for more quantitative output at the expense of quality.

Perhaps the most dangerous of all the problems besetting the public services in Africa is the one stemming from the relationship between politicians and public servants. The drawbacks of African public services have been blamed on the politicians and the latter have blamed public servants for failure to carry out development

programmes as expeditiously and as efficiently as was required and for failures to align themselves with the masses. Unwilling to accept any blame, African politicians have publicly castigated high ranking public servants and thereby divested them of their prestige and honour. Naturally, the public servants have been hurt by what they considered as unwarranted and malicious attacks on their integrity and, being unable to use public forums to publicise their performance and exonerate themselves from blame, they resorted to subtle means of showing their extreme displeasure. Some public servants have, on their part, been leaking out all the blunders of the politicians with the result that the latter have tended to put loyal but less qualified officers in sensitive public service positions. The mutual recrimination between politicians and public servants have set the stage for conflict. As a result, services stagnated and development projects were invariably adversely affected. Meeting the challenge of the 1980s will certainly require the existence of a healthy and productive relationship between politicians and public servants. Unless they work together very closely and harmoniously national objectives will not be achieved and both will continue to disappoint the people. The result may be disastrous since the ensuing instability and public disappointments may lead to changes of government and even of public servants. Examples abound where at least the top echelons of the public service have been 'cleared of anti-revolutionary elements' and widespread dismissals of public servants have often occurred after coups.

For a long time politicians, administrators and academics have been debating the relationship between politicians and public servants, especially about the relationship of a minister with his permanent secretary. No answer has yet been found except, perhaps, in the developed countries which have evolved very strong administrative traditions, but even with them, the issue has not been fully resolved. But Africa cannot blindly copy these traditions; it must evolve its own political and administrative systems.⁵ The challenges of the 1980s will demand that African politicians and public servants co-operate fully with each other in their joint responsibilities in the development task.

⁵ African countries, especially the French-speaking countries, have been accused of blindly copying other administrative systems, especially that of the erstwhile colonial power. See G. Langrod "The Genesis and Consequences of Administrative Mimicry in Africa", *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. XXXIX, 1973, No. 2

One of the issues that need to be resolved and the resolution of which will in all probability promote understanding between politicians and public servants is whether public servants should take part in politics, and if so, to what extent. This question is highly complicated because it requires a definition of what 'politics' is and a clear delineation of what is political and what is not. In countries where only one political party exists, civil service neutrality has been rendered irrelevant. The neutrality of the civil service is apt and relevant when two or more political parties are competing for office in fair and free elections—that is, as President Nyerere puts it, "Where the continuity of public administration must not be thrown out of gear at every switch from one 'party' government to another".⁶ It seems that the idea of dual or multiple political parties is fading away fast in many parts of the continent and we see an increasing number of single party states. The other factor which eroded civil service neutrality is the new role imposed on the service by the requirements of development. The dormant masses need to be awakened to their interest and mobilized for the development effort. This is too great a task to be left for the politician alone. Owing to the magnitude of the challenge politicians, public servants and the masses will need to join hands in order to stand up to the challenge which faces them all. In a nutshell, development imposes a multiple role on the public servant; the administrator must also be a planner, a political agitator, a teacher or trainer, and even agricultural extension worker; the doctor must also train nurses and dressers and must, in addition, engage in public health education and thereby become a teacher for the masses; and even the tax collector must explain to the people why the government should need to collect taxes and must not confine himself merely to tax collection. This is not to say, however, that public servants should become the "Jack of all trades"; on the contrary, the challenges of the eighties will require them to be highly specialized. It is meant to emphasise the spirit of co-operation that should characterize the public service. The doctor will certainly be acting within his profession if he takes part in public health campaigns and thereby help to advance public health education. The tax collector will collect more taxes and even make his job less burdensome if he can secure public co-operation.

The argument has been advanced therefore that development

⁶ Julius K. Nyerere, "Democracy and the Party System," *Freedom and Unity; Uhuru na Umoja* (Dar-es-Salaam 1966), p. 203

requires that civil servants come out openly in support of government policies and even try to legitimize these policies to the public so that they will have a full impact. Public service neutrality was a hotly debated issue in the late sixties and early seventies but it is by no means a dead issue since it touches on the relationship between politicians and public servants.⁷ It also touches on the question of political spoils vis-a-vis the merit system; if public servants are encouraged to become propagandists for the government then such political activity may become a criteria based on merit and performance.

A government's approach to development no doubt affects the shape, size and character of the public service. A number of African countries have already chosen the socialist approach to development and perhaps more countries may do the same in the 1980s. This option requires that all public servants be highly politicised and the top echelon may even be absorbed into the one political party that is allowed to exist.⁸ Hence top administrators, managers and other professionals in the public service become politicians by being nominated as party officers. Indeed transfers from party positions to the top positions in the public service and vice versa may take place. It is worthwhile therefore to examine the implications of such a system for the public services. First, we have mentioned earlier that party and bureaucratic positions tend to be interchangeable. Secondly, the public servants are required to be highly politicised and may even engage in proselytising activities with the result that their role is no longer limited to the execution of policy.

Thirdly, promotions tend to be granted according to the individual's contribution to the activities of the party. Fourthly low-ranking public servants may accordingly enhance their prospects for promotion by becoming active agents of the party than by increasing their professional competence. Fifthly, senior public servants get a chance to improve the quality of policy-making since they are better educated and better trained than many of the politicians. Sixthly,

⁷ Professor Adedeji, for example, raises a number of questions about the relationship in a single-party state between politicians and civil servants on the one hand and between civil servants themselves on the other hand. See his Monograph, *The Tanzania Civil Service A Decade After Independence: Progress, Problems and Prospects*, University of Ife Press, 1971.

⁸ The number of countries where such a situation already exists or is taking shape is not small; so far Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Benin, Guinea and Algeria.

party positions may in the end be filled, to some degree at least on the basis of education and long service (which means experience). Finally, nationalisation which is an integral part of the socialist ideology overtakes a very young and growing public service:

- (a) nationalised industries and commercial enterprises require highly competent staff to run them and these simply are not available, the result being that highly sensitive positions in the economy are entrusted to young, inexperienced and untrained personnel;
- (b) government functions and responsibilities are increased considerably by further public takeover of other subsidiary enterprises like houses, shops, buses, etc.;
- (c) an already weak and overburdened public service then tends to stagger under the heavy weight of the additional burden with the result that services stagnate or even deteriorate.

Perhaps we will see in the 1980s many more public services which are no longer conducted by merit and are no longer characterized by political neutrality. In such situations public service commissions will indeed be meaningless and the challenge posed to such public services will be formidable since government will take over many more responsibilities which are beyond the capacity of their weak and overstretched public services.

Countries which intend to run their public services on merit and to insulate them from politics will need to strengthen their public service commissions so that the best and most highly qualified and competent candidates will be recruited into the public services. The governments must also ensure that the services retain and reward those who show excellence in their performance. Our experience attests to the feat that African public services have not been able to retain their best men and women.

This brings us to the question of brain drain. There is much truth in the saying 'brains are like hearts, they go where they are wanted'. The best and most competent public servants have been lured into politics and businesses. A highly significant number of people have resigned their public service positions to stand for elections and become ministers. This has happened in many African countries because high-ranking public servants have lost their prestige and power to politicians and especially to men who were either their own

subordinates previously or who did not, in any case, have comparable experience and education. So those who were lured by political power resigned their positions and went into politics. Others who were no less qualified and no less competent, were attracted by huge profits which they were likely to make in business. Still more others were attracted by higher salaries and better conditions of service outside their countries or even outside the continent.

Naturally, a public service which is facing difficult challenges must first of all muster its own internal strengths and must prevent itself from disintegration. Like a fighting army it must use its best talents and put its highly trained men in the most sensitive and strategic positions for which they had been trained; keep their morale high; keep itself above corruption; persevere in its duty and deploy all its resources in the best possible way, or else it will lose the fight and the service will disintegrate.

The challenges of the 1980s will be hard to meet. In the first place many boys and girls will leave schools and many men and women will come out of the universities. All of these will want employment and most of them will want white collar jobs. Can the public services absorb them? The challenges of the future have serious implications for educational policy. Educational planning must be based on the manpower requirements of the future and not on a set pattern which was determined long ago without considering the needs of the economy. The discrepancy between the output of the educational system and the requirements of the employment market may be wide and serious. Ghana for example, has since the early seventies been experiencing difficulties in employing liberal arts graduates while it had acute shortage of graduates in the technical and scientific fields. The social problems arising from unemployment of educated youths may cause very serious political disturbances which African governments may find hard to cope with.

The notorious problem of inflation will probably remain with us at least in the early 1980s and curbing inflation will pose a difficult challenge to the African countries. Rising inflation has already outstripped the salaries of public servants and has made life more difficult for the rest of the population because of the rising cost of living. As a result, governments will be under increasing pressure to subsidize food prices, to build low cost housing and to create more employment. The people will certainly become more aware of their

problems in the 1980s owing to the spread of education and as a result of government sponsored politicisation of the masses. They will, therefore, exert pressure on the government to provide more and better services but they will most certainly be more costly to provide in the 1980s. The people will not only demand more and better services but they will also clamour that these services be delivered as expeditiously as possible. Therefore, bureaucratic red tape will no longer be tolerated and will come under more severe attack.

However, all these developments are more likely to happen in the cities and towns than in the rural areas. If, therefore, the government concentrates on the urban area as a result of these pressures, the rural areas will continue to be neglected and urban populations will live more and more comfortably at the expense of rural inhabitants. Hence governments must not allow these pressures to divert their attention away from rural development. Government capacity to deal with both urban and rural challenges will very much depend on how it organises its business. If it creates the necessary urban authorities, vests in them the necessary powers to perform urban services, provides them with specialized and competent staff, and assigns them wide revenue sources, its burden will be greatly eased and it can then pay more attention to the rural areas which have been neglected for a long time. But urban areas are very demanding and cannot dispense with central policies, guidance and co-ordination. The big cities of Africa have grown very rapidly since independence especially the capital cities partly because governments have concentrated their development efforts on them and partly because of excessive centralization of decision-making. The result is that the administration of African cities has become, like that of big cities elsewhere in the world, complex, and therefore, has posed a number of difficult challenges. Such urban services as electricity, water, health, education, sewerages, and telephones are not only to be provided in great quantities but on high quality as well. These services are also very interdependent and highly technical with the result that they require sound physical planning and good co-ordination. They require highly specialised engineering, medical and educational staff as they require large numbers of skilled labour. Apart from the technical complexities there are also political and socio-economic complexities in the urban scene. In the first place, shanty towns and squatter settlements have their own political and

socio-economic implications and have proved to be difficult to deal with. Secondly, urban areas and urban interest groups continue to compete, sometimes fiercely, for the attention of the various urban authorities and they lobby for the adoption of policies that will serve their own interests. Thirdly, co-ordination is complicated by all these centrifugal forces. Therefore, urban administration will need first class administrators which means administrators who are highly trained and able to perceive the interplay of political, economic and sociological factors and who are able to accommodate competing interests.

The rural areas will continue to cry out for development. Rural inhabitants have been neglected and alienated for a long time with the result that they harbour a deep mistrust of the central government. Much of the pressure for attention to the rural areas is not, however, coming from the rural population themselves. The desire to relieve urban congestion, the need to cope with urban unemployment, and the compelling fact that about 90% of the population live in the rural areas have all combined to make rural development a priority area. So far, however, the concern with rural development has not manifested itself in meaningful programmes of action. Decentralization has been largely illusory in consequence of which local government councils have been poorly staffed and poorly financed. These consequences of illusory decentralisation have been used by governments as a pretext for not devolving meaningful functions upon local government councils.

In the 1980s we can reasonably expect the pressure for rural development to increase sharply. The need to increase agricultural production in order to feed a growing population, to increase foreign exchange earnings and to be able to exploit raw materials with which to establish and run the necessary agro-industries will necessitate more attention to the rural areas. The economic performance of Africa has 'fallen substantially below targets set in the Strategy for the Second United National Development Decade'.⁹ Its growth in agricultural production has been very slow. The result is that after two decades of independence Africa still remains very poor in relation to the other continents. Of the 28 countries in the world

⁹ Speech by Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, to the 4th Meeting of the Conference of Ministers and 13th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa (Kishasa, 28 February, 1977) published by ECA, p. 7.

designated as 'least developed' 18 of them are in Africa. The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Professor Adedeji, gave this warning recently to the Fourth Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of the Economic Commission for Africa:

If past trends persist and if there are no fundamental changes in the mix of economic policies that African governments have pursued during the past decade and half, and if the current efforts to fundamentally change the international economic system fail to yield concrete positive results the Africa region as a whole will be worse off compared with the rest of the world at the end of this century than it was in 1960.¹⁰

With such a state of preparedness Africa is facing fresh and difficult challenges which the New International Economic Order poses. This new International Economic Order seeks to establish international economic justice by attempting to remedy the imbalance between rich and poor nations. In the first place one of the principles of the New International Economic Order stresses 'the need for developing countries to concentrate all their resources for the cause of development'.¹¹ In view of past experiences, however, even the mere channelling of resources to development will, in Africa, be quite a feat. It is known from experience available so far, that financial resources have been reapprehensibly dissipated while human resources have not been properly utilized. The New International Economic Order calls upon the rich nations as well as international organisations to adopt policies which are designed to help the economic advance of developing countries. But, experience shows that it is not easy for developing countries to utilize foreign aid. Post-mortem examinations have revealed many 'graves of foreign aid'. One tragic consequence of such revelation has been the reluctance of rich nations to be as generous in their foreign aid as they were in the 1960s. The New International Economic Order has therefore been meeting with some resistance. The main attack has been on the

¹⁰ Speech to the 13th Session of the Economic Commission for Africa and the 4th Meeting of the Council of Ministers, Kishasa 28 February to 3 March 1977, published by ECA, p. 10.

¹¹ Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during its 6th Special Session 9 April-2 May, 1974, U.N. New York, 1974. p. 4.

premise on which this new order rests, namely, that the rich countries have become richer through centuries of exploiting the peoples of the Third World. Whatever the merits and demerits of this argument, however, the fact remains that rich nations have become very skeptical about the efficiency of foreign aid.

The implications of the New International Economic Order for the African countries are fairly clear and can be summed up in one sentence: the African countries will have to work hard in order to help narrow the gap between poor and rich nations and have therefore, to produce more. The rich countries will play the role of a helper and more, but we cannot say with any certainty that all the necessary help will be forthcoming. Even if the developed countries show genuine commitment to the New International Order the targets spelt out in that order will not be attained as far as Africa is concerned unless African Nations themselves make real efforts to do their share. In the transfer of technology, for example, African countries must show their capacity to absorb technology and to adapt it to their own local conditions; these are the things which they cannot expect foreigners to do for them. Transfer of technology is one of the corner stones of the New International Economic Order. Another is manpower training and management development. Developed countries and international organisations may train managers, administrators, technical personnel and other professionals but the brain drain itself being the sequel of counter-productive policies which many African governments pursue will continue to be experienced in the 1980s. Even those trained personnel who choose to serve and remain in their countries may not be utilized in positions for which they had been trained and so doctors and engineers may be nominated as ambassadors, or cabinet ministers, laboratory technicians may become administrators and agricultural officers and teachers may be assigned administrative positions in the ministry with little or no time for professional field or classroom work. All this serves to illustrate how government policy can defeat the whole purpose of international aid.

Economic performance is not determined purely by economic factors. As some of the critics of the New International Economic Order state, "In all cases, in the Third World as in the West, the principal determinants of economic achievement and performance have been human aptitudes, motivations, aspirations, modes of

thought, social institutions and political arrangements".¹² These critics say that it is these factors '... which have either fostered or hindered the willingness to work, save, take risks, and perceive and pursue economic opportunities'.¹³ These criticisms are, however, directed as much against the Third World, of which Africa is a part, as they are against the New International Economic Order. But the criticism is justified because for example agricultural extension has often failed in Africa, as in elsewhere in the Third World, for sociological reasons and many development projects are known to have failed for political reasons. Even the proliferation, mismanagement and near-collapse of public enterprises have been blamed; at least partially, on political factors. Development plans have been rendered useless by lack of public support, administrative inadequacies and absence of political commitment.

The world is moving at a fast pace and is likely to move at a faster pace in the future. Keeping up with this pace is itself a great challenge. African public services should be able to cope with rapidly changing situations; otherwise, new technologies will be rendered obsolete before they are learnt and adopted to local situations. Of course the New International Economic Order does not mean that the progress of the world must be stopped so that Africa will catch up with it. President Nyerere once said to the Tanzanian people: "We must run while others walk". This is the spirit that should characterise African public services in the 1980s, for they must stand up to the challenge. There is yet the challenge of coping with demands of rising complexities; future public demands will be complicated by technological considerations, by complex internal and external political situations and by difficult economic factors.

Despite nearly two decades of independence African public services cannot yet free their economies from foreign domination. The universities have not produced enough competent geologists to explore the resources of their countries and many African countries depend heavily on foreign geologists to tell them whether they have mineral resources. Similarly, engineers, doctors, veterinarians and agronomists are all in short supply. So are African entrepreneurs, for

¹² Professor P.T. Bauer and B.S. Yamey, "Against the New Economic Order" *Commentary*, April, 1977, p. 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

in a great number of African countries the commercial sector is still dominated by foreign minority groups. The situation is far worse when it comes to intermediate labour and so doctors may work without nurses and without laboratory technicians. Engineers may work without surveyors, foremen, or other assistants. Intermediate and skilled labour are very important to development since they can do many things which unnecessarily take most of the time of highly specialised labour. In the United States, for example, the pressure on the highly specialised medical doctors has been relieved by physicians and much of the physician's has been entrusted to special nurses. The result is that highly specialised medical doctors spend their precious time only on genuine cases. African countries have not yet learnt to concentrate on areas where they are experiencing acute shortages. In Somalia, for example, there are but a handful of water engineers when in fact much of the country is arid and the country's economy is mainly pastoral. Loss of human and animal lives are common in the drought and are mainly due to lack of water. Water supply should therefore have been given top and urgent priority in that country; yet the technical personnel to do the work are very few and cannot cope with the huge demands made upon them.

How can African countries industrialize, multiply their agricultural production, and develop entrepreneurial talent when they have only very few doctors, geologists, engineers, agricultural specialists, trained managers, administrators, nurses, laboratory technicians, and other skilled labour? The challenges of the future demand that these be produced in adequate numbers. It is not only their quantity that matters. Since their capacity to execute very technical development projects will depend on their quality, it is necessary that they should receive first class training which enables them to apply skills and solve problems. This is a special challenge to the universities, polytechnics, and schools of management and/or of administration. They themselves must be of high quality in order to produce specialists who will meet the expectations of their people.

But the mere production of such staff is not enough. There still remains the question of their utilisation. The challenges will not be met and the situation will remain unchanged if they are allowed to sit in their comfortable offices in the national capital. These are the men and women whose retention is equally important since their train-

ing represents a heavy investment. To retain them, the government must adopt sound policies of personnel administration, incentives for field work, good salaries, promotions, protection against arbitrary discharge or dismissals, medical care and good terminal benefits.

The stagnation of African economies has very often been attributed to the pursuit of sterile (even damaging) policies by African governments. There is a great deal of justification in this. Government policies have been said to be responsible for bureaucratic inefficiency, for the failure of development projects, for aborting development plans, for misusing foreign aid, for lack of economic analysis and forecast, for discouraging foreign investment, for soaring public debts, and for rural stagnation. If every conceivable failure is blamed on government policy then there is a glaring need for the improvement of policy-making. Africans, however, have not been oblivious to the need to improve public policy-making. Indeed President Siaka Stevens said in a speech recently that since the best educated and best trained people are in the public service, to isolate them from policy-making circles would be tantamount to denying the country the full use of its best brains. In a similar vein, President Nyerere argued that in a one-party state it is 'absurd to exclude a whole group of the most intelligent and able members of the community from participation in the discussion of policy simply because they happen to be civil servants.'¹⁴ Apart from ensuring their loyalty this is in fact the main reason why senior civil servants are members of the party in single-party states. Top administrators and managers, are encouraged not only to influence policy but to involve themselves actively in policy-making so that they will be seriously committed to the execution of the policies which they had helped to formulate. The major advantage to be derived from this is that policy-making will cease to be the exclusive preserve of often ignorant politicians.

The issues which African governments will deal with in the 1980s and beyond will be highly complex. They will need to have highly specialised people in their public services to collect data on and analyse the various issues that confront government with a view to coming up with policy alternatives with a complete analysis as to the relative merits and demerits of options. Politicians will never have the time to undertake such a difficult task even if they are highly

¹⁴ Julius K. Nyerere, *op. cit.*

educated because undertaking research into and coming up with a comparative analyses of the various policy issues which confront a government is time-consuming and intellectually demanding. The people who are researching into the various policy issues must first establish themselves as authorities in their respective fields of research so as to assure the quality of their produce and in order to command the respect and confidence of the politicians so that the latter will heed their advice.

Governments will need to have feasibility studies of economic projects; they will need to know in advance the likely immediate results of policies as well as their far-reaching implications, they will need to understand and appreciate the full implications of the New International Economic Order; they will need to know the full implications of the various proposals that are being discussed in the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Seas which will govern future exploitation of marine resources; and they will need to analyse the various economic issues that are being raised and discussed in the North/South dialogue. Likewise, foreign aid is not always purely altruistic and is sometimes granted on a *quid pro quo* basis, and so African countries will have to know its political as well as its economic implications, both immediate and long-range. Nowadays, we witness a great deal of foreign military intervention in Africa and the signs of super-power rivalry. Is this a 'second scramble for Africa' as some people fear it is? African States must of course be able to examine the full implications of this on their economies and on their exercise of sovereignty. Similarly, domestic political and economic issues have to be examined in detail so that policy options will be weighed more carefully. For example, there is a talk, following OPEC's recent meeting in Geneva, of increasing oil prices in the 1980s. What will be the impact of this on African economies? African governments should know implications well in advance so that they can take good precautionary measures. Furthermore, we know from past experience that African countries become aware of problems when these reach a crisis point. African governments should look ahead and be able to foresee the problems that are in the offing and deal with them before they deteriorate into a crisis and this requires that the implications of events be analysed in order to see what they mean for the future.

The need for policy analysis is therefore obvious. It follows that the institutional framework for this be established. First of all, the

universities and other institutions of higher learning should be strengthened and their ability to undertake research should be developed. Governments should also be willing to channel funds into research so as to encourage it. Secondly, special research institutions such as the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER) should be established at the national level and encouraged. Thirdly, governments may establish 'think tanks' comprising **persons of high intellectual standard and** experience who are drawn from the universities and other research institutions as well as from administrative and managerial ranks. The main function of the 'think tank' would be to advise the government on highly complicated issues and to present viable policy options to it. In addition, government ministries should contribute to the improvement of policy-making by giving their expert advice. This requires, however, that the senior officials in the ministries should be experts in their own right and should be able to render sound technical advice concentrating especially on the implementation aspects of policy in order to balance academic discussion of issues. This will also serve to enrich the jobs of specialists as well as generalists.

Planning should be recognised as a tool of policy-making. The objectives of the plan, determined through a rational process of policy-making, should be clearly enunciated in the plan so that departments will have a clear mind as to what targets to hit and when. Planning should also involve a realistic appraisal of available means and an equally realistic evaluation of the capacity of government department to carry out the plan and achieve its purposes within the plan period. The hiatus that has hitherto divided the formulation and implementation aspects of planning should be bridged. Plan implementation should also be reflected in the budget so that objectives are related to available resources.

To do all this, there should be an attitudinal change on the part of public servants as well as politicians. Senior public servants should discard anachronistic bureaucratic values which are not compatible with development. They should also get rid of the aloofness and diffidence that still characterise some of them. They should go to the masses and try to understand them and interact more vigorously with them in order to be sensitive and responsive to popular needs. They should equally try to understand the politicians and have a meaningful dialogue with them on national issues as well as issues

that concern the interests of the public service. Human nature being as complex as it is, there will be no doubt some friction and sometimes sharp conflicts among the various personalities but conflict should be institutionalised and not be allowed to get out of hand.

The implications of all this is that there must be a highly professionalised and motivated public service in order to meet the difficult challenges of the future. There is dire need for training in all fields of endeavour and the need for training is greater with the greatness of the challenge. The expansion of government functions and responsibilities will call for intensive training throughout the service in order to be able to cope with these huge responsibilities. Governments should therefore take training more seriously and should strengthen all training institutions. They may indicate their seriousness by linking training to promotions so that individual public servants will willingly seek to be trained. The majority of public servants in Africa need training to improve upon their present job performance and learn new jobs or new and more efficient methods of doing things. Furthermore, professionalisation of the public service which includes the learning of new skills implies a great deal of training activities. To emphasise the dire need for training in all sections of the public service in Nigeria the Udoji Commission states in its report :

of the various problems facing public management in Nigeria, by far the most serious is the shortage of experienced, skilled manpower. This constraint is seen in all categories and all levels of the service. From the birth of the Federation, this has been the prime problem impeding public management.¹⁵

So the 1980s will require a highly professionalised public service which is able to handle and analyse very complex national and international issues and which can cope with the challenges of the future generally. But the ability of the public service to handle these issues and carry out difficult and highly technical functions will be largely determined by its ability to learn and use new administrative technology and also by its ability to adapt other technology to the peculiar situations of its country. Training should therefore be intense and continuous.

¹⁵ *Report of the Public Service Review Commission, Federal Ministry of Information (Printing Division) Lagos, September 1974, p. 2*

However, it is not sufficient that African public servants know how to do their jobs; they must also enjoy them so that they will do them properly and with dignity. This brings us to the question of morale which depends on decent remuneration, fringe benefits, promotion and recruitment on merit, a good superannuation scheme and general conditions of service. The strains and stresses within the service can also be eased by *esprit de corps* and by 'elasticity of control' which is the hallmark of a professionalised public service. Conditions of service should also be revised on a periodical basis, say once every five or ten years, in order to take account of the inevitable rise in the cost of living, otherwise the salaries of public servants will be outstripped by rising inflation in consequence of which the temptation of corruption will become too great to resist.

The deleterious effects of corruption on African political and administrative systems is also too great to be ignored. Corruption has distorted these systems to a great extent and has stripped the public services of their dignity and courage. It is not only meagre salaries and low pensions that encourage corruption but also government policies such as restrictions on trade licences as well as the cumbersome and erratic administrative procedures which create bottlenecks with the result that members of the public corrupt public officials in order to have them expedite the processing of their papers. To fight against corruption will therefore require establishing good conditions of service, improvement of administrative methods and procedures and a definite attempt to imbue the public service with a very strong sense of ethics.

Along with corruption governments must also fight against other forms of impropriety such as nepotism and favouritism. As mentioned earlier the requirements of nation-building may compel a government to accommodate tribal interests and to favour the recruitment of members of tribes who are aggrieved by being under-represented or under-represented into the senior positions of the public service irrespective of their educational qualifications and experience. This will inevitably hurt the morale of competent and dedicated officials and will also adversely affect quality as well as the quantity of the output of public servants. Political needs may thus be antiethical to the requirements of administrative efficiency. The discrepancy can of course be remedied by education and training of promising members of under-represented tribes and this requires advance planning.

The Public Service Commissions of the 1980s should play a more vigorous and positive role in order to help in moulding a civil service that is equipped with the skills and knowledge essential for discharging its onerous duties and which enjoys at the same time public confidence and esteem. They must help to mould an energetic and dedicated public service that combines high professional standards with high moral standards. The distinction has been made between 'advisory' and 'executive' Public Service commissions. 'Advisory' Public Service Commissions tend to be passive and indifferent to political nominations within the public service and an 'executive' commission may conflict with an executive President who is keen to assert his authority and seeks to relegate the Commission's role to an advisory one. The politicians do in fact make the general policies governing the public services but they are not content, apparently, with their role of policy-making. Some countries do not even have a Public Service Commission or a Head of the Civil Service and appointments to high positions in the public service are made by the Politbureau of the Party or by the cabinet. Public service Commissions should, wherever they exist, be composed of persons who are well educated and whose integrity is impeccable; they should be persons of sufficient means so that they will be above corruption and, they should also be fair-minded and free, as far as possible, from nepotism and tribal prejudice. This is perhaps too idealistic but pursuing the ideal is often very rewarding.

So much has been said about improving the public services. What about the politicians? This paper is not of course about politicians but improving and enhancing the capabilities of the public service alone will be grossly insufficient to meet the formidable challenges of the future if the quality of the politicians does not improve. The politicians themselves should be educated and enlightened so that they can discuss difficult problems intelligently and understand and weigh the advice of specialists. If the intellectual gap between the politicians and public servants is very wide, as it is in some cases, they will never understand each other, and, worst of all, they will continue to pull each other in opposite directions.

Conclusion

The numerous challenges that continue to confront African public services and will continue to confront them in the 1980s are the subsidiaries of two broad challenges: nation-building and

development. These challenges are so difficult, perhaps impossible, to meet with a poorly staffed, poorly motivated and largely untrained public services, especially when the problems of the public services are compounded by political economic and social factors. To meet the challenges, therefore, African countries should greatly improve their public services. They should, in addition, develop sound and practicable strategies for achieving their goals and objectives.

What is required to meet the great task that lies ahead is a highly professionalised and strongly motivated public service. The need for this has been recognized of late, and those who advocated reforms in the public service have called for a high degree of professionalisation.¹⁶ But professionalisation does not only mean that intensive and widespread training be undertaken but it also means that the individual public servants should persevere in self-improvement and in the uplifting of their respective professions by conforming to professional standards and ethics and by subscribing and contributing to professional journals so that they will keep abreast with developments in their respective fields of specialisation.

The task of professionalizing the public service falls mainly to the **Public Service Commission**. They should be the first to give due recognition to professional qualifications, experience and performance by recruiting and promoting on merit. They can do great harm by recruiting and promoting the wrong people and by devising a grading system that favours generalists over specialists and does not, therefore, encourage specialists. A continuous staff development programme should also be an integral part of the Commission's work since feeding the public services with officers of high calibre will require the undertaking of such a programme. This should not be taken to mean that the Commission must be involved in the actual conduct of training; it means, however, that the Commission must have a programme according to which the ministries will send their officers for training so that these officers will either receive additional professional qualifications which will prepare them for higher responsibilities or will attend 'refresher' courses

¹⁶ Chief Udoji, for example, has called for a professionalised public service in Nigeria; see Chapter 3 'A New Style Public Service', *Public Service Review Commission*, op. cit. Similarly, Professor Adebayo Adedeji concludes his analysis of the Tanzania Civil Service by saying that Tanzania '... needs a growing corps of committed professionals,' see Adedeji, *The Tanzania Civil Service, A Decade After Independence*, op. cit., p. 30.

which are designed to expose them to the latest developments in their respective fields of specialisation. Finally, the Commission should play a leading role in bringing about the appropriate attitudinal change and in creating an atmosphere conducive to development.

Improving the public service as well as the political system of a country is a continuous process, the stages of which must be planned with meticulous care. However, while it is necessary to adhere to such plans the adherence must permit a degree of flexibility so that plans can be improved upon in the light of unforeseen developments as they run their course. It is therefore necessary to have a permanent machinery to ensure a periodical evaluation of the capabilities of the public service and to identify problems and bottlenecks. An Organisation and Methods (O&M) department may be established to undertake such a task but this should be so highly placed as to be able to command the respect of the ministries. Alternatively, a Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform may be established as in the Sudan so as to combine two complimentary functions in a single organisation. The need to improve the public service should be considered a natural accompaniment of administrative reform and one institution should be entrusted to perform this dual function as in the Sudan.

Owing to the paucity of resources many African countries certainly need help to improve and increase the capability of their public services. In the first place, the African countries themselves must cooperate in the exchange of information on administrative and political innovations and must share their experience so that each country will have the chance to learn from the other. This can be facilitated by existing regional institutions such as ECA, AAPAM and CAFRAD which already contribute a great deal to the improvement of African public services by holding seminars, conferences, symposia and training courses. In addition, African countries should have programmes for the exchange of national experts as well as university professors; both the OAU and ECA can do a great deal to facilitate this. Furthermore, African countries should avail themselves of the wide range of opportunities presented by foreign aid in the form of advanced administrative, management and technical training. As far as the analysis of public policy is concerned ECA has tried to create and develop a regional institution which will monitor, analyse and assess future world and African economic and

political trends in order to help African governments arrive at more rational policy decisions. However, the idea of creating such an institution, which was to be called 'African Centre for Advanced Public Policy Analysis and Strategic Studies (ACAPPASS)', did not, unfortunately, take off the ground.

However, socio-political factors may tend to defeat all these efforts. The competition between the various interest groups (ethnic, commercial, professional etc.) for the allocation of scarce resources will tend to militate against recruitment and promotions to sensitive policy-making positions in the public service strictly on merit. The problem of tribalism is as much damaging to a fair and just system of recruitment and promotions as it is to a sound policy-making system. Persons who are appointed to high public office for their political credentials rather than for their educational and professional qualifications and experience will not be able to command the confidence and respect of their subordinates; nor will the politicians heed their advice. But a government may be compelled by circumstances to use high public service positions as a means of preventing a dangerous coincidence between political and regional (ethnic) cleavages.

Political stability is essential also for the evolution of political and administrative systems. But politicians are usually impatient for quick results and tend to assail in public, or even replace, individual public servants when they see that quick results are not forthcoming. Future challenges will demand that politicians overcome this weakness by trying to learn that the process of developing a strong and professionally capable public service takes a very long time. This does not mean, however, that they should tolerate bureaucratic inefficiency and indifference to public opinion which politicians are, quite understandably, very sensitive about.

Finally, government may flicker between the need to promote national unity by trying to accommodate disparate ethnic interests and the need to recognise and reward individual merit in the public service. Only highly dedicated and experienced governments can steer the ship of state through such a difficult course and unless African governments show seriousness of purpose in their efforts to transform their public services into powerful instruments for formulating and executing national public policies and development programmes they will fail to achieve their objectives.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS PREPARED BY DR. G.M. SALIH AND
MESSRS DAVIDSON NICOL & N.A. GRAHAM

Excerpts from Other Two Papers and Resultant Discussion

Dr. Salih in his paper started by pointing out the rapidity and great number of changes that characterised the post-independence period to which the African governments and their public services had tried to respond. The most important of these were decolonising the public service personnel and government and public service structures, experimenting with changing constitutions and political philosophies which eventually led to military interventions in government and the rapid growth of one-party States and consequential politicisation of public services. He predicted that this period of transition characterised by rapid change and experimentation would continue to the 1980s thus continuing to present challenges to public services.

He then turned to new challenges, specific to the 1980s. He strongly argued that one of the most pervasive and toughest challenges would be the population explosion in Africa. He quoted **United Nations Statistical Office** estimating total African population to be 346 million in 1970; 449 million in 1980; and 587 million by 1990. He said that from the same report it was estimated that of the above mentioned African population 66% will be twenty-one years or under in 28 countries! The same age group (i.e. 21 years) or under will form 60% of the total population of 40 countries! The immensity of the implications and problems to be solved by governments and their public services in terms of feeding, educating usefully employing these populations, and in terms of rural and urban development and administration and the resultant political and social pressures were easy to imagine but will constitute a tremendous challenge to solve. Major administrative reforms and modern management techniques would have to be adopted as a matter of absolute necessity if such problems were to be solved. Therefore the wise adoption of major administrative reforms and efficient management techniques would be a major, and in his opinion, the most exciting challenge to the public service of the 1980s, especially after the poor performance in this field during the 1960s and 1970s.

The growing trend of one-party States and socialist ideology

necessitating politicisation of public services and over-centralisation would provide another challenge.

He ended by quoting a number of points recommended to developing countries for priority action during the 1980s by the Fourth Meeting of Experts organised by the United Nations programme in Public Administration and Finance in October, 1977, which he thought were relevant to the African situation. These are :

- (a) the improvement of organisation for planning, plan implementation and evaluation of results;
- (b) the promotion of greater rationality in policy formulation and decision making as a basis of operational effectiveness;
- (c) the training and development of human resources for public administration;
- (d) the strengthening of public finance infrastructure and management;
- (e) the fostering of entrepreneurial capabilities in public administration generally and in public enterprises particularly;
- (f) the improvement in efficiency and effectiveness of investment management;
- (g) the improvement of the financial management and performance of public enterprise and their contribution to the overall national development; and
- (h) the strengthening of regulatory and facilitative role of public administration to enhance the contribution of the private sector to national development.

Graham and Nicol's paper set out to consider the trends in the international civil service, both in order to examine their relevance to the situation of African public services, and to consider ways in which these services could co-operate to meet the challenges of the 1980s. The paper indicated similarities in that both the international civil service and African public services under consideration, were in a large measure derived from the British Secretariat tradition which stressed four main principles viz.,

- (i) loyalty;
- (ii) impartiality;
- (iii) independence; and
- (iv) recruitment on the basis of merit.

Both were young and were surprisingly struggling with some similar types of problems:

Regarding loyalty, they argued that whilst the international civil service was experiencing problems connected with its staff members transferring loyalty from their national governments to international organisations, African public services were experiencing similar problems with their individual members trying to foster a loyalty to the national governments and away from numerous tribal and ethnic communities.

The principle of recruitment and promotion on merit had engendered great disagreement and politicization in international civil service. There has been serious debates and resolutions on the emphasis advocated by member States on geographical distribution of staff as a criterion for recruitment. Similarly, in African States which are struggling to build a nation from divided ethnic communities, merit has often been sacrificed at the altar of nation-building and socio-economic development measures designed to create a sense of togetherness or belonging for all communities in the young States.

These problems have undermined effectiveness and morale in the international civil service just as they have done in African public services.

The international civil service was trying to introduce career development systems in its effort to improve its effectiveness. African public services were similarly trying to improve their manpower management and career development.

The authors posed questions as to whether it was not possible, and mutually beneficial, in this career and manpower development area for the two services to exchange staff on a regular agreed basis for the sake of both gaining relevant experience in the different areas of operation. They wondered whether alternating service between the international civil service and the national public services of Africa could not possibly stem the "brain drain" as well as provide employment to unemployed, well educated elements in developing countries.

The paper concluded by stating that the real challenge for Africa in the 1980s lay in Africa's capacity to train and maintain a class of devoted public servants at all levels. It pointed out that in the last few

years Africa had produced a crop of outstanding and overworked national public servants, as well as international ones, who they believed, were equal to the best in the world. It was for that reason that the authors were convinced that the prospects for African public services in the 1980s would depend on the dignity and respect that African governments would be willing to give to their public administrators. Public servants should similarly reciprocate. There should be understanding that the politician and administrator were colleagues, both using their specialised skills for the progress and betterment of Africa in different but essential ways.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the discussion that followed, led by the discussants, Prof. Adebayo Adedeji,¹⁷ and Mr. S.E.K. Dranimva¹⁸ there was no significant disagreement that African public services would face formidable challenges in the 1980s and beyond. Some of the most significant challenges were categorised briefly as follows :

- (a) Facing up to, and resolving the spill-over of the unresolved problems of the 1960s and 1970s.
- (b) The need for African public services to establish a recognisable identity through self-discipline, flexibility, responsiveness and dedication to serve.
- (c) Nation-building and all the sacrifices and understanding it demanded.
- (d) Initiating, planning and executing effective and discernible development which reaches down to all citizens, especially the rural populations of Africa.
- (e) Establishing effective and meaningful regional co-operation and expanding the public services' vision beyond national boundaries.
- (f) Making full use of the opportunities of the New International Economic Order, if it were achieved.
- (g) Arresting the "brain-drain".

¹⁷ Prof. Adebayo Adedeji is President of AAPAM and Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

¹⁸ Mr. S.E.K. Dranimva was, then Permanent Secretary to the President and Head of Civil Service, Uganda.

- (h) Forging better relationships and communication between all entities of the public service, including politicians.
- (i) Creating and/or modifying new technology to suit African environment.
- (j) Development and wise management of manpower resources at all levels.

Chapter 4

Preparing for the Future

What had emerged as the Round-table drew to an end, was a rather gloomy picture of the current state of African public services and their prospects of facing up to the problems and challenges of the 1980s and beyond. Indeed some participants had voiced opinions that the painters had been too pessimistic and that the brighter side of the situation had not been reflected sufficiently on the canvas.

Perhaps it is only fair at this point to very briefly put the situation and prospects of African public services in a world-wide perspective. There is hardly any country in the world, whether developed or developing, that is ever generally satisfied and happy about its public services. Those great public services that have been admired and praised in history are recognised more in retrospect and with hind sight than at the material time of their existence. It is probably in the nature of bureaucracies to lag a little behind the constantly changing situations and to attract criticism and antipathy. This is of course, not to excuse African public services from their deficiencies and shortcomings, but to establish that this situation is not peculiar to African services alone.

Despite this perspective, however, the Round-table established quite clearly that there was need for great concern and urgent action to find remedies to the numerous problems facing African Public Services. The objective of the final session was to find out what to do about the situation.

During the course of the Round-table, certain conclusions had already been arrived at and have been recorded in the preceding pages.

But perhaps the most important decisions of the Round-table were concerned with the future role of the African public services, especially the role of the senior public servants in actively reshaping the services to fulfil their tremendous responsibilities.

It was generally agreed that it was no longer sufficient for public services to sit around and wait for the urgently needed reforms to be initiated by irregular reform commissions appointed at times of near crisis, as a 'fire-fighting' mechanism. It was also agreed that many reform initiatives had failed because of the approach adopted and because of the unco-operative and sometimes hostile environment in which the efforts had been launched.

Some of the hostility and actual opposition were traceable to the public services especially the senior public servants.

It was agreed that the senior public servants were the best equipped and should indeed be the most concerned in bringing about effective and relevant reforms. It was therefore their primary duty to spearhead the necessary improvements in African public services. It was equally the personal duty of every participant in the Round-table to take it as a mission to try and create a favourable and conducive environment in his country for administrative reform through :

- (i) initiating dialogue, discussion and positive thought on administrative reform in seminars, workshops, permanent secretaries' and heads of departments' meetings, and any other forms available to him;
- (ii) persuading his government and politicians to accord very high priority to administrative reform and generally making the public service efficient, effective, responsive and dedicated to the service of their countries;
- (iii) ensuring a comprehensive approach to the planning of reform, proper and workable phasing of implementation of, and establishment of permanent machinery for regularly reviewing the constant need for, planning and implementing administrative reform, and evaluating the effectiveness of these reforms.

It was similarly agreed that the African Association for Public Administration and Management was particularly suited and capable of bringing together top-level public servants from its member countries for the purpose of drawing up concrete plans of action and sustaining the interest roused during the Round-table until concrete progress had been achieved, and that therefore AAPAM Secretariat be charged with the duty of :

- (i) **planning and organising a series of Round-tables on the same general theme of African public services in the 1980s, designed to discuss and generate concrete plans of action;**
- (ii) **forming and fostering national chapters in member countries where none existed and strengthening those in existence;**
- (iii) **contacting member governments at the very highest levels for the purpose of propagating and gaining support for the administrative reform movement and for AAPAM itself.**

It was in view of these serious conclusions and call for action that AAPAM organised its second Round-table on "A Profile of an African Public Service in the 1980s" which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, 7-15 August, 1979, and the results of which form part II of this book. The chapters of this part were prepared by Messers G. Mutahaba, K. Owusu-Ansah and G. Hyden. The proceedings of the Nairobi Round-table Conference are summarized in the appendix.

A Survey of Problems, Goals and Tasks

The newly-independent States of Africa vary considerably, not only in size and population but also in economic strength and stability, in political maturity and resilience, as well as in historical and ethnic backgrounds. However, they all share a variety of characteristics; they are economically underdeveloped, politically fragile and generally unstable, as well as socio-culturally inhibited. Additionally, there are common factors like their youthfulness as nation-states, the impact of recent colonizing powers on their total culture and the relative inexperience of their politicians in the art of government. Others include the intensity of problems of communication, the abnormally high rate of illiteracy among their populations, the critical shortages of manpower, capital and technology for development and the phenomenal expansion of governmental functions since the attainment of political independence. Consequently, the African countries tend to experience similar types and salience of problems, to attach the highest priority to matters of nation-building and economic development, and to have a craving for speedy national development.

The Development Problems and Tasks of the 1960s

The coming of independence to African States witnessed changes and growth in the type and multiplicity of problems and therefore the type of functions performed by the public services of these countries. Whereas, during the colonial period the major functions or tasks of the public services consisted of the maintenance of law and order; facilitating the productive efforts of mainly colonial-dominated and colonial-oriented economic activities with any other activities being carried out in support of these two, independence has meant a vast growth of more complex tasks and activities. The

maintenance of law and order still considered as one of the most important functions of government, is no longer as simple, since it now involves the protection of national unity and sovereignty and the inviolability of the State, tasks which call for different patterns of public service capabilities. In addition to this important task the countries, and therefore the public services, have had to take on new tasks including (a) the acceleration of economic development involving at times the ownership and management by the government of public enterprises which provide facilities to privately managed economic activities; (b) the activation and espousal by the government of socio-cultural development, involving the provision of social infrastructure like schools, health facilities, water supplies etc.

To cope with these new and expanded tasks, the public services of the African States, have had to strengthen and expand their existing capabilities. The types of capabilities freshly acquired and the extent to which the growth and fresh acquisition has matched the magnitude of the expanded tasks, will be discussed in a later part of the chapter.

The growth in the pattern and complexity of the development problems, and the consequential expansion of public service tasks (in number and scope) which took place in the 1960s and 1970s is expected to continue into the 1980s. Indeed, the problems are going to be greater and more complex.

What are the major challenges likely to be faced by African States in the 1980s? As noted above, the type and pattern of problems faced by African countries in the 1970s is likely to stretch into the 1980s. The major problems faced by African countries as they enter the 1980s include the following: Economically, African countries are bedevilled by abject poverty; low capacity to develop an otherwise well-endowed natural resources base; low productivity and in almost all cases small gross national product. These problems, moreover, become compounded by a high rate of inflation which is not made any better by the fact that the countries depend heavily on the highly priced products of the industrialized world for which they have to pay which proceeds from basic products (mainly raw materials) whose prices continue to fluctuate unpredictably.

A related problem is the fact that even the little that is produced by the nation is in many cases very disproportionately distributed with a small faction of the society consuming a very great share of the total product. This does not necessarily make Africa unique, indeed in

many parts of the world, disproportionate distribution of the GNP is noted to be a problem, what makes the obtaining situation in Africa and in the other developing countries desperate, is that the share of the product which goes to the majority still makes them continue to live poor lives.

The task of resolving these problems, which is the acceleration of economic development will not be any easier in the 1980s. It may in fact tend to be more difficult than in the past decade. The resources for development are not likely to improve, indeed the industrialized world which has been the traditional source of a lot of financial resources up till now, might be facing substantial economic difficulties of their own during the same period. African countries will, therefore, have to become more aggressive in internal resource generation; create local industrial bases; exercise greater economy in the utilization and management of available resources and push for increased productivity in industry and agriculture. Finally, since private entrepreneurial ability is most likely to remain low, government will have to continue, or even increasingly take on task of being the entrepreneur, as well as performing function of economic planning; including data and information collection for plan formulation and plan implementation.

Politically, the problems consist of, first, the fragility of the nation-states, with national unity and sovereignty being threatened in many of the countries. Ethnocentrism remains a problem in the old countries like Ethiopia, as witnessed by the Eritrean and Ogaden secessionist bids, as much as it is a problem in the new States, like Angola. In the majority of cases, national unity is of course, not threatened to the extent of dismembering the nation-state, but it can go a long way in forcing governments to adopt specific policy stances on particular issues of development, say in the allocation of development resources. It might be necessary to discriminate in favour of areas or ethnic groups that feel themselves to be the underdogs in the country. The second problem, in the political realm; consists of the lack of institutionalisation of the political system and process, owing to the fact that, in the majority of the cases, the political system has not been given a chance to last for more than ten years. Thus, in all countries, tradition exists on resolving the problem of political recruitment and political succession, a factor which in turn does to some extent, contribute to frequent changes of governments and their policies. The third aspect in the political realm is the fact that

because African countries are young and weak economically and politically, they tend to be overlooked, cheated and ill-treated by the stronger and older countries of the developed world. African government will, therefore, have to develop the capacity and skills which will enable them in spite of the stated weaknesses, to prevent infringement on their sovereignty. They may have to utilize the strategy of concerted action more often than has been the case to date, through strengthening regional economic and even political co-operation.

The third set of developmental problems is social in character or what is increasingly called "the quality of life". Whereas, the present concern of the developed world with regard to the aspect of "quality of life", includes such issues as "planning for the use of leisure time," Africa still has to grapple with eliminating the basic problems, including ignorance, poverty and disease, by having to provide for expanded educational facilities; health facilities, clean water supplies and help in the production of an increased quantity and quality of food for an expanding population. The goal of eliminating the above social problem is, however, not made easier when one takes into account the fact that the rates of growth of the population that will demand to be catered for in the next decade, will, according to UN calculations, be one of the world's highest, with well over 50% of the population below 21 years. The dependency ratio (those demanding to be served without a commensurate contribution), already relatively high for the continent, may grow even higher.

If these problems are to be confronted successfully, African governments will have to take on more and expanded functions, because many undertakings and issues relating to the resolution of the above problems can only be handled by the government or with its support. If this anticipated expansion in size, and scope of governmental functions or activities is going to be successfully catered for, the public services, which will be in the forefront of the battle, will have to expand and acquire new and more sophisticated sets of capabilities.

Implication of Development Problems and Tasks for Public Services Capabilities

To successfully meet the tasks described above, African public services, as indeed other continents' services, will have to acquire a certain amount of preparedness, including the possession of a minimum set of certain attributes.

The first set of attributes of the desirable public service is structural/organisational in dimension. A public service of the 1980s will need to be organized in such a way as to emphasise flexibility in order to cope with turbulent and complex situations; it must be facilitative of co-ordination of the various component parts, it must permit the fullest utilization of talents available to the country; must be open, allowing for more frequent interchange of personnel among sectors, reducing the specialist/generalist conflicts, impelling better understanding between politicians and civil servants and between top civil servants and those in lower ranks and making for wider interface with the public.

The other set of attributes of the public service structure which is desirable, relates to capabilities or competences possessed by the people performing the tasks. Competences would relate to such aspects as the breadth in the array of knowledge and skills possessed by the individual personnel; and the ways in which such competences are deployed for purposes of facilitating the performance of national development activities. As we noted earlier, the complexity of development management requires that the public services' areas of competences be wider in scope and deeper in skills than the competences which were required of the colonial civil services. Not only does the service require generalist administrators, doctors, veterinarians and accountants but experts in operations research, project appraisal etc. It is also important that people occupying generalist administrative positions will have to have a working knowledge of many varied disciplines in order to cope with the intricacies of development effectively.

In order to achieve this situation, it is important that recruitment be carried out on strictly merit principles and that the terms and conditions of service in the public services be facilitative of the recruitment and retention of such people who might be in great demand in other sectors of society. But till now, few African governments have bothered to have people train in these very specialised fields, it will be necessary for African governments to devote substantial resources to the training of personnel in these scarce skills.

The third attribute of the African public service for the 1980s is dedication to duty on the part of the personnel. This requires that staff be concerned with the quality of their work, speed of action and economical in the use of resources. Attitudes like these have to be ingrained into the staff, even though their emergence and permanence will also be a function of the activities by the managers of the public

service in meeting adequately the expectations of public employees.

Another attribute, which is prominently lacking in African public services, is honesty or a sense of morality. Honesty involves desisting from either taking advantage of one's position to obtain a personal gain, either through misuse of public resources or by obtaining benefits from members of the public in exchange for favours. It might be important for governments to work out specific codes of conduct which might serve to at least provide a yardstick to civil servants in judging their conduct. A real cure to the problem, however, is to devise ways of inculcating a new sense of morality into the public service.

Finally, one other element, which though not internal to the public, but which nonetheless influences its effectiveness, is the environment; especially, the task environment. The most important element of this task environment is politics or the political system. The issue to be raised is, what external controls and influence should be brought to bear on the public service to ensure administrative morality as well as responsibility to the public?

It is difficult to prescribe in respect of this issue—indeed there were as many “correct” replies to the above questions, as there are environments. We can, however, suggest that whatever relationships are worked out, they ought to leave the public service confident and not hamstrung by the political system if it has to perform efficiently and effectively.

To sum up, the minimum attributes expected of the African public services of the 1980s are many and varied. In terms of structure, the public services are to be characterized by their capacity to accommodate rapid environmental changes by improved facilities for co-ordinating their constituent parts, by openness of flexibility in both internal and external relations, as well as by designs permitting optimal involvement of and accessibility to the varied citizens; in terms of process, the focus should be on increased professionalisation through continuous and systematic training to acquire up-to-date knowledge, skills and techniques, optimal utilization of available manpower, procedures and methods which make for speedier action, and on greater involvement of staff in organisational decision-making; in terms of values and attitudes, the public servants need to be more result-oriented in problem solving, more honest, more cost-conscious, more meritorious as well as more responsible and responsive to the public. These then are the rough

criteria against which the performance of the existing public services of the countries studied will be evaluated in the next section.

The State of the African Public Services

To what extent can the African public services be said to approximate the attributes mentioned above. The answer to that is that the gap is still great, they are all invariably bedevilled by a number of problems, of some of which have been discussed at length in Part I. Here we shall only reiterate the major ones. The key ones include those of structure, like poor definition of roles, functions and interrelationships in the governmental machinery, those of general management processes like poor supervision of personnel and "anachronistic administrative practices"; those of personnel administration; those of financial management such as lack of skills for budget preparation and inadequacy of mechanisms for monitoring performance and ensuring financial accountability; those of strategic planning as well as those of ensuring administrative responsibility. No doubt all these issue areas are of crucial importance to African public administration. But as has already been explained in the Preface an in-depth analysis of the totality of these problems was not possible because of time constraints. As a consequence, the analysis which follows, focuses primarily on a few selected problem areas, the chosen areas being those of the machinery of government, personnel administration and administrative responsibility.

Before embarking on a survey of the administrative critical issues in the chosen problem areas, however, it is appropriate to emphasize that, far from operating in a vacuum, the public service is highly influenced by environmental factors the most important of which is the political milieu. Whereas in the industrialized countries, the relationship between politics and administration is clearly established through tradition, no such definition of relationship seems to have emerged in the African countries. As a consequence, it is not unusual in the performance of government business, for African politicians to tread in areas which, in the industrialized countries, would be left to public servants. For example, it is common for such politicians to compete with public servants in the implementation of government policies in general and to meddle in the management of personnel in the public services. The converse is also true where civil servants usurp the power of their political

masters. So unless the optimal relationship is unambiguously defined for the African context, any measures which may be taken to resolve the management problems outlined below are not likely to produce the desired results.

A review of the situation in Africa reveals that there is a growing divergence between the emerging approach to tackling problems and issues of development, on the one hand, and the structure of the machinery of government, on the other. While the development problems are increasingly viewed in terms of specific needs requiring functionally integrated programmes for fulfilling them, the structure of the machinery of government remains organised essentially in terms of classical ministries, none of which is concerned with the totality of the newly perceived approach to the problems. The need therefore is for the structure to be made to respond to the changed approaches and problems. Yet the structure invariably remains inflexible by and large, incapable of accommodating the new imperatives. A central issue then is how the machinery should be structured to facilitate optimal development of the countries. In particular, what should be the most appropriate manner of organising government business from the centre?

A related problem is the issue of central-local relations. There are still questions about how much autonomy to grant the peripheral institutions to keep pace with accelerated development and without giving them a lever for fissiparous moves. What sort of institutional framework to adopt at the grassroots level is still a very lively and debatable issue. Other pertinent questions include the division of responsibilities among the various levels of the administration, the mechanisms to be instituted for purposes of effective co-ordination of activities, devices for monitoring performance in the field, as well as mechanisms for obtaining feedback from the peripheral organs.

Another common style of organising public business in Africa is the public enterprise. Yet with almost unbroken regularity the majority of such enterprises have become a drain on national resources in many of the countries. Examination of the causes would therefore appear to be germane. In carrying out this investigation, issues like the rationale for this method of organisation, how its objectives are typically set and how effective they are, how much autonomy it should have from government control, and the nature of its internal administration would have to be dealt with.

Furthermore, in establishing the central direction and structure

for managing the personnel of the public services, the question of determining the role of the administrative head becomes problematic. Should the post of Secretary to the Head of Government for instance be separate from that of the 'internal manager' of the public service? If so, what should be the respective powers, functions and relationships? Also, unsettled is the problem of what form the central personnel agencies should take and what their functions and interrelationships should be to ensure effective synthesis and co-ordination of manpower development and utilization within the system.

The structural adjustments that are proposed as a result of the above-cited analysis will, hopefully, improve the effectiveness of development administration. But development will only take place where the skill in structural design is accompanied or supported by commitment and the human resources to translate the dreams into actualities. Hence the importance of personnel management in the public services.

The idea of manpower planning as an integral part of overall development planning is fast becoming accepted in a great majority of African countries. Indeed, in many of these countries, structures exist for preparing manpower plans and for attempting to integrate them into the national development plans. Yet forecasting of manpower cannot often be said to be realistic. What the causes of this situation are, and what factors and systems should be established to deal with the situation are not matters to be dismissed lightly. Also, because development of manpower policies has not been adequately recognised in many African countries, a common pattern has emerged in the manpower field which is characterized by acute shortages of persons adequately trained in certain professional and technical occupations, and inappropriate deployment of trained staff, all amidst an abundance of unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Another area of concern is the selection process. Assuming that there is an adequate market of trained staff for the public services, it becomes important to ensure that the intake systems for the public services are sufficiently designed to recruit and retain the different categories of personnel required by them. How should the recruitment and selection be done to ensure the size and quality of the selected personnel are optimal for development? And what types of modifications, if any, need be made to the career service—embracing as it does elements of security of tenure, the merit system, classi-

fication and grading of career systems—to facilitate the achievement of this objective in the African context?

Perhaps even more crucial to development-oriented public service is the preparedness of its manpower to execute the task of government. Yet almost every stage of a typical public manpower training system experiences difficulties. Promotion is another problem area, with the problems revolving around seniority and the need to secure high morale without sacrificing innovation. Also the disciplinary procedures in the public services call for serious attention. An obvious problem is how to stem the tide of the general deterioration of standards and discipline in the organisations; a related issue is the often interminable tardiness with which disciplinary cases are treated, as well as the power that heads of ministries should have relative to the public service commissions in disciplinary matters and other aspects of personnel administration. Another instrument for developing personnel in organisations is the performance evaluation system, its purpose being to assist the individual reported upon to improve on his performance. But the use of this tool hardly achieves its real purpose in African countries.

Moreover, although satisfaction of employees' basic economic needs ordinarily helps to reduce their dissatisfaction with the organisations concerned, it does not of itself bring about increased motivation. Yet preoccupation with remuneration has often belittled adequate consideration of more intrinsic modes of raising morale and motivation in quite a number of African public services. As a result morale and productivity are typically low. The devices available to these public services for improving the situation are seldom examined.

Furthermore, the influx of a large number of industrial workers into the public sector has tended to bring into the public services some issues that have historically been more associated with the private sector. Such questions include the right of employees to unionize, strike and participate in collective bargaining. Nevertheless, some African public services either have no negotiation machinery at all or have systems that are manifestly inadequate for resolving problems, on collective staff welfare and conditions of employment. Discussion of ways of ameliorating the situation would therefore appear to be germane.

Finally, if public servants have rights, they also have obligations to the government and the public at large. With the rapid expansion of

services and regulatory functions of governments almost everywhere, it is now generally accepted that the public servant exercises considerable power. Many statutes have their origin in the civil service; the advice of public servants ordinarily shapes legislative proposals of politicians; the bureaucrats actively influence policy makers and the public with their ideas; and they usually have substantial discretion about what importance to attach to, and how to implement quite a number of statutes.

The doctrine of fairness should be practised in almost every sphere of government activity. Most governments in Africa, at some time or other, have been accused by some of their own people of such evils as corruption, nepotism and gross injustices being inflicted on some of the people by public officers. It is true some governments in the course of human history have even been brought down by such malpractices which destroy all concepts of understanding and national endeavour and constantly undermine both public officers who are lazy and feel no qualms about doing nothing for the whole day, and others who feel no concern even at seeing poor people wait in their offices without being attended to for many hours, whilst such officers sit down in their offices doing nothing. Sometimes, these officers fail to respond when members of the public seek their help, and yet others make decisions as though they were not dealing with human beings. Such people have no right to live on public funds least of all in the relatively poor and developing countries of Africa.

The new governments of Africa, like any other government in the world, are supposed to implement political policies, and to observe both technical and legal procedures which will ensure that the citizens are treated with fairness and justice. It seems to us a matter of great importance that a democratic government should not shackle or inhibit its people and should not deprive them of their civil liberties in any way. As we build and improve the machinery of governments in African nations, we should observe the principle that there is to be complete equality for all citizens; that there should be maximum political freedom for all citizens; and that there should be the maximum possible participation by the people in their own government. It is essential that government leadership should be capable of fostering a dynamic and responsible society. Government programmes should be designed to develop capabilities for "the administration of change", which development is necessary for

the encouragement and exercise of efficient leadership vital to the creation of better conditions of life in society. It is also necessary to examine the legal system of each country in order to ensure that laws that tend to favour one class of the society at the expense of the other are reviewed so as to achieve justice for all irrespective of their positions in life.

To maintain and promote responsible conduct and to provide responsible political and administrative leadership so as to facilitate social justice and equitable distribution of wealth, it is essential that means be found to guard against the administrative abuse of power. For without proper democratic controls the concentration of power in administration might not only give rise to inefficiency and mistrust of the government but also may increase the risk of subverting the government itself. How to reconcile administrative *power* with administrative *responsibility* then becomes as much a burden of the public servant of the 1980s as it does of the present public servant.

Chapter 6

Methods of Organising the Centre

The basic constitutions of nations usually divide the functions of government among a legislative, an executive and a judiciary. The relative powers and relationships between these organs of government differ markedly from country to country. But in almost all cases, the executive has responsibility for managing the affairs of the nation within the framework of the laws of the country.

To implement the goals of the executive, a civil service is invariably established. Although this civil service does not constitute the entire executive machinery of government it is a very important organ to the extent that it is not only concerned with the implementation of the executive's policies but also actively involved in the formulation of the policies.

In order to survive and grow, every institution should constantly adapt itself to changes in responsibilities and tasks thrust upon it by its changing environment. Thus, the African civil services have, with the attainment of independence, made reasonable attempts to respond positively to changes brought about by the need for additional and complex functions to be performed and for a shift in emphasis from law and order administration to the promotion of socio-economic development. The effects of excessive centralization and bureaucratisation under the new African governments have also been a reason for the major structural reforms that have taken place within the first two decades of political independence in English-speaking Africa.

Prominent among the review commissions set up to carry out systematic reviews of the civil services were Ghana's Mills-Odoi Commission of 1968, Kenya's Ndegwa Commission of 1971, Nigeria's Udoji Commission of 1975 and Ghana's Okoh Commis-

sion of 1977. Underlying each of those reviews were feelings that the existing machinery was faulty and that there was an intolerable gap between plan and performance.

The proposals for structural reform have focused on the need for greater flexibility; a change in the rigid class structure and the salary structure of the civil service, greater interchange of senior staff between the civil service and other occupations, and new structures to support a decentralized system of administration all meant to improve the innovativeness and problem-solving capacity of the public service. Yet, it needs to be emphasised that the achievement of this objective has by and large eluded the civil services of the African countries concerned. As a consequence, a yawning gap exists between these structures and the shifts in goal emphasis. What must be done to bridge this gap with respect to the civil service structures *at the centre* and to prepare these structures for even greater changes in the future is the focus of the analysis which follows in this chapter.

For purposes of analysis, these central structures are classified under the following two headings:

Leadership structures for providing central guidance in policy making and planning; and the functional structures for formulating and implementing policies and plans (that is, the organisation on the basis of ministerial and departmental divisions).

Machinery for Central Leadership

Generally, the central system of a civil service structure in an English-speaking African country would have a *basic* hierarchy which may be represented as follows:

Cabinet secretariat—Office of the Head of Government, Ministries, and Departments.

The Office of the Head of Government is usually ultimately responsible for the efficiency and effectiveness of the whole government apparatus. It is the focal point for directing and monitoring the whole range of government-wide activities. Directly under this office come a number of ministries each under a political minister and assigned a specific function of government to perform. It is in these ministries that most of the government's policy-making takes place. But the efforts of these ministries at policy adoption cannot often be complete without the collaboration of one or other of the following central co-ordination agencies; the Cabinet Secretariat, Ministry of Finance, Ministry responsible for Economic Planning, and the

Central Agency responsible for establishment of control and development of personnel in the civil service. These four structures therefore usually perform a commanding role in national decision-making.

The Cabinet secretariat's dominant influence arises from the fact that it co-ordinates the policy inputs from ministries for consideration by the Cabinet as a whole, briefs the Head of Government on all matters for discussion at Cabinet meetings and monitors the implementation of Cabinet decisions. The power of the Ministry of Finance springs from the need for it to be represented on virtually all inter-ministerial committees, from its role in the control of expenditure, and from its responsibilities for fiscal and monetary policies. The Ministry of Economic Planning and the Central Agency for Personnel policy derive their strengths from the leadership they provide to the other ministries in policy-making in the fields of economic development and civil service personnel management, respectively. Together with the office of the Head of Government, this cluster of central structures is required to guide, co-ordinate and control the other ministries in strategic public decision-making.

In the performance of these leadership roles, a variety of problems ordinarily crop up. One of these problems is the ineffective direction of the civil service due to an uncertainty about the exact role and powers of the Head of the Civil Service. Another difficulty stems from the cabinet office's inadequate administrative capability for formulating and co-ordinating policy proposals in an environment of rapid change. Moreover, there is the difficulty of insufficient co-ordination of planning efforts due largely to the "unclear" role of the Ministry responsible for Economic Planning in this respect and to inadequacy of the administrative structures for monitoring the implementation of national plans.

Leadership of the Civil Service

In almost all the public services' studies, the Secretary to the Head of Government is also Secretary to the Cabinet, as well as Head of the *Civil Service*. In fact, the only exceptions are in Zambia and the Sudan. In Zambia, Secretary to the Cabinet who is also, the Head of the Civil Service is located in the office of the Prime Minister. In the Sudan the headship is assumed by the Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reform.

Normally, the responsibilities of the Secretary to the Head of Government *per se* or Secretary to the Cabinet, where the two posts

are separate, are not different in pattern of work (although different in content of work) from those of any other Permanent Secretary. The duties of the Head of the Civil Service are ordinarily not formally prescribed even though the occupant of the position is invariably expected to give leadership to, and co-ordinate the efforts of the ministries. The result is that power relationships are more often confused and there does not appear to be, in practice, any structure directly charged with primary responsibility for initiating and prosecuting administrative reforms in the civil service. The question then is how the leadership should be reorganised so as to make for effective direction and co-ordination of the civil service.

In this connection, there is a key issue which has for some time been a matter of public debate in most of the African countries, and that is whether the investment of the Head of the Civil Service with responsibility for the combined posts of secretary to the Cabinet and Secretary to the Head of Government does not make far too demanding a role within the context of a developing country.

On the one hand, those in favour of splitting the post between different people argue that the workload of the combined posts of Secretary to the Cabinet and Secretary to the Head of Government does not make far too demanding a role within the context of a developing country.

On the one hand, those in favour of splitting the post between different people argue that the workload of the combined post is excessive, and therefore, government business is slowed down inadvertently; that the civil service management and reform are shunted into a side-line as more urgent national and international issues become the major preoccupation; and that changes in the headship of the civil service with changes in political regimes; which are inevitable because of the political nature of the post of Secretary to the Cabinet, do not make for continuity in administration.

On the other hand, those opposed to this division of responsibilities argue that such a measure would result in diffusion of authority in one vital area of government machinery where clearcut authority is required and therefore would not make for speedy dispatch of government business. The usual third point, and final one, is that the person who has responsibility for the implementation of government decisions would thereby be denied full responsibility for the deployment of the personnel to carry out those decisions.

We note that the problems about the existing system which are posed by those who want a split in the headship post are generally not denied. It is the remedies proposed for solving those problems that are resisted. Nevertheless, we contend that all the three difficulties raised by opponents of the proposed change can be resolved through organisational and leadership devices. Diffusion of authority can be minimised if the jurisdictions of the officials concerned are clearly and unambiguously defined. Solutions to the essentially socio-psychological difficulties of personality clashes reside, by and large, in the quality of the selections made for the posts. In this connection, it is suggested that selection to fill the posts should be done in such a way as to ensure cordial working relations between the occupants while guaranteeing that each of them is free to form and express his independent views on all matters concerning the management of the civil service. Conflicts are inevitable in every human organisation. But these need not be beyond solution if there is an identified and recognised organisational device for managing them. Therefore any conflicts that may arise must be resolved where they belong, on the laps of the Cabinet. Indeed, far from introducing a dichotomy between the political and management functions of the Head of the Service, acceptance of the proposal would seek to ensure that disagreements, if they should occur, are fought out *between* two administrative bodies rather than *within* one, and to emphasise the necessity for putting the locus of conflict in the Cabinet, where it belongs and where it is more likely to bring such issues to political attention, than to bury them within the Civil Service.

As regards the third objection on ground of the necessity for the implementation of government decisions and the deployment of personnel to go together, there is no disagreement, except that we think that the two functions need not be carried out by one and the same body so long as there is healthy communication and collaboration, both formal and informal, in the performance of both formal and informal, in the performance of both sets of duties.¹

From the analysis of the objections then it is clear that, considering the multifarious nature of the responsibilities of present incumbents and other factors, it would serve the interests of the civil

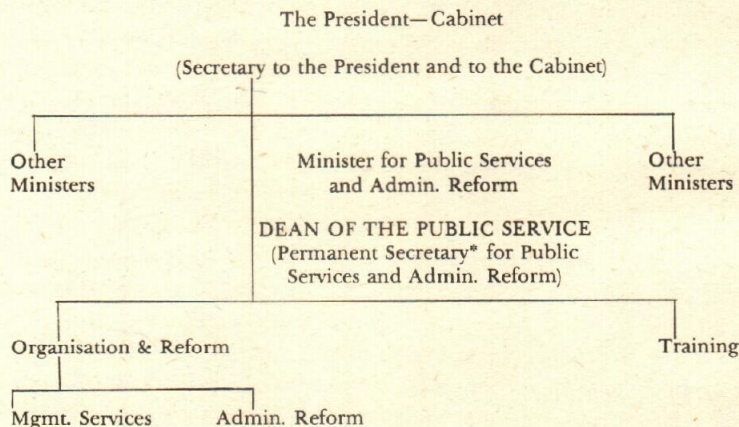
¹ K.A. Owusu-Ansah, "Restructuring the Central Bureaucracy in Ghana" Greenhill Journal of Admin., Vol.1, No. 3, 1974, pp 4-5.

service better if the responsibilities were redistributed to reduce the incidence of the total burden on any one person.

However whilst this position in the argument commands widespread support among civil servants, there are generally no specific or agreed plans on how the burden should be divided or redistributed.

The Sudan has however, made attempts to redistribute the duties and the system it has introduced, could with appropriate modifications, be adopted by other countries. In the Sudan the holders of the post of "Dean of the Public Service" (that is, the chief internal manager of the public service)² and the combined one of Secretary to the Cabinet are different persons. The top structure of the machinery looks something like this:

The Secretary to the President and the Cabinet, whom for short we would like to label '*Secretary to the President*' remains ultimately responsible for the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service as a whole. But, subject to the directions of a minister, the Dean of the Public Service has authority to dispose of almost all matters



* The term 'Permanent Secretary' is used throughout this book for the top-most administrative post in a Ministry even though the equivalent designation in Ghana and Tanzania is 'Principal Secretary' and in the Sudan 'Under-Secretary'.

² In this particular context of the Sudan, the term 'public service' is meant to embrace only the Civil Service proper, the Public Enterprises and the Local Government Service. The term has however a wider connotation in the rest of this book, subsuming as it does almost all *administrative* agencies which draw their emoluments from central government sources.

concerning the structure, personnel policy and staff development, as well as the reform of the public services.

This division of labour attempts to solve the problem of inadequate attention being paid to questions of structure, internal management and reform in the Civil Service in particular and the public service in general. It also deals with the problems of excessive workload on the Head of the Civil Service, and ensures some continuity of leadership in the service even if the Under Secretary Office of the President, should be removed from office with change in government. Though unspecified, the duties of the Dean are expected to involve ensuring that the objectives of government are appropriately defined and *as far as possible*, quantified and that plans in terms of machinery and resources are devised to meet them. They should also entail the fostering of professionalism among public servants.

A key issue is obviously how much authority the Minister of Public Services and Administrative Reform commands vis-a-vis the other ministers of the government and how much active support he has from the Head of Government. Beyond this there is a more fundamental problem in that the working relationships between the Dean and the Secretary to the President are not clarified either by custom or administrative means. To remove these problems, the Minister responsible for the Public Service should be more influential than the other ministers in the counsels of the government; secondly, the leadership and co-ordination roles of the Head of the Public Service should be spelt out unambiguously; and finally there should be no doubt about the formal relationship required to be established between the Head of the Public Service and those with whom he will be sharing the burden of directing the public service.

In the light of these criteria we would like to make three main suggestions for consideration by African governments.

The first is that a specific Ministry should be created to take charge of Civil Service matters. This Ministry should, among other things, be primarily responsible for personnel policy and administration, management consultancy services as well as administrative reforms. But, in contradiction to the practice in the Sudan, the administrative head (i.e. the Permanent Secretary) of this Ministry should not be the Head of the Civil Service.

The second is that the Secretary to the President should be the Head of the Civil Service and that his responsibilities in this latter

capacity (over and above his duties as Permanent Secretary for Cabinet and for the Office of the President) should include the provision of leadership and direction to the Civil Service as a whole; the giving of advice to the Head of Government on the appointment and deployment of other Permanent Secretaries and similar statutory appointees, the maintenance of high morale and *esprit-de-corps* and a favourable image of the Civil Service including the observance of a code of ethics; the promotion of good relations between politicians and civil servants, and the promotion of good relations between civil servants and the public. The task of providing leadership and direction in particular requires a little illustration; this function, it is envisaged, should entail the focusing of the attention of the Head of the Civil Service on the style and type of long-range policy analysis and its proper institutional setting, as it is not easy to guarantee that the appropriate units designed to support the process of decision-making can tender the results of their studies when they are wanted. The Head of the Civil Service should also have an eye on the most appropriate arrangements for relationships between central government and local agencies in the field; too much centralization creates delay, but too much local discretion hinders the maintenance of a planning system. Finally, he should regularly examine the part played by Civil Servants in projecting the political objectives of the government to the general public, for there seems to be a set of tensions between retaining "career status" and providing an acceptable popular explanation of the government's intentions.

Finally, to reduce the workload of the Head of the Civil Service, it may be necessary for "Deputy Secretaries" to be appointed and sent to his office so that most of his functions can be carried out through judicious delegation of his authority.

As regards relationships with other top Civil Servants, it is suggested that notwithstanding the relative independence of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Office of the President needs to remain the nerve centre for the full range of Government activities. There would therefore appear to be a case for according a higher status (in terms of position, emoluments, etc.) to the Secretary to the President, more so since his position is more subject to political risks than any other in the Civil Service. To expedite action on the planning and management of administrative reforms and to ensure there is adequate focus in the Cabinet on the

economy and efficiency of the Civil Service, it is necessary for the Permanent Secretary of Ministry for the Civil Service, to have direct access to the Cabinet as well. Conversely, since, by virtue of his office, the Secretary to the President cannot be divorced from any aspect of Government activities, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Service would have a duty and obligation to keep him continuously informed of civil service matters. This goes to underline the importance of the exercise of caution in the selection of persons to fill these posts. While the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Civil Service should be a mature and seasoned Civil Servant who commands the respect of the total Civil Service, the Secretary to the President has to be a qualified administrator respected for his knowledge and experience. The latter need not be chosen from the ranks of the Civil Service but should be in *active* support of the ideological position of the government.

Inadequacy of Central Machinery for Policy Analysis

The second problem area, it will be recalled, is the organisation for public policy making. An aspect of this problem arises from the inadequacy of information and analysis available to the government for policy-making to effectively cope with the rapidly growing and changing national environments in Africa. National policy goals are often multiple and complex; resources in terms of both finance and manpower are very limited; there is intense time pressure on governments to raise the standard of living of their people, while past policies are often irrelevant to present problems. Yet generally,³ no effective machinery exists at the centre to ensure that the appropriate information is collected, *analysed* and presented to the government as a whole on a continuing basis as well as facilitate the adjustment of policies to rapidly changing norms and values.

Moreover, the existing structures tend, in practice, to focus more attention on narrow sectoral or ministerial matters than on the national policy package or comprehensive strategy for the government as a whole. The resulting policy-making is unduly fragmented, in the absence of any structure for integrating these sectors.⁴

³ Among the countries whose Public Services were studied by the Research Team, Nigeria was the only one with a well-established 'Think Tank' or national Policy Development and Review Body. Even here, the 'Think Tank' has now been absorbed by an independent Institute of Strategic Studies.

⁴ K.A. Owusu-Ansah, "Public Policy-making and the Ghana Civil Service" *Greenhill Journal of Admin.*, Vol. 4, Nos. 3-4, 1978

The existing machinery for public policy-making therefore, needs to be reinforced not only by the establishment of appropriate inter-ministerial cabinet committees (with adequate professional support) to give second thoughts to policy proposals before they are considered by the full Cabinet, but also by the creation of an agency to be charged with the development of a central framework within which the government's policies as a whole may be more effectively formulated. The suggestion then is to institute a Policy Analysis Unit directly responsible to the Head of Government but at the disposal of the government as a whole. The main functions of such a body will be on lines similar to those prescribed for Nigeria, namely, "to undertake policy research and analysis of interest to the central government as a whole, to develop new ideas and policy guidelines, suggest new dimensions to existing government policies on the economy and society generally, and to review policies and measures from time to time in order to draw attention to those inconsistent with overall government objectives."⁵

But for this policy analysis structure to have a chance of survival, at least three conditions must exist. First, the politico-administrative leadership must be convinced of the positive contributions which social and policy science can make to the solution of national problems. Secondly, the political actors will have to give ample political support to the structure, facilitate the flow of information to it, and take the policy technocrats into confidence in the planning of government-wide policies. Finally, the relationship between the Ministries and the policy analysis unit must be clarified: the policy analysis unit should not take away the responsibility of the Ministries in the formulation and implementation of policies.

Insufficient Co-ordination of Planning Efforts

Finally, there is the problem of ineffective co-ordination arising from the "peculiar" status of the ministry responsible for economic planning as well as the inadequacy of the monitoring and evaluation of implementation.

Ministries responsible for economic planning on the one hand have a tendency to be relatively expansive in their approach to national development whilst ministries of finance traditionally tend to concentrate too much on the financial implications of their work

⁵ Federal Republic of Nigeria, Brochure on "National Policy Development Centre", issued by the National Policy Development Centre, Lagos 1976, pp 5-8.

to the detriment of the other aspects. Therefore, even where the two portfolios are held by one minister, it requires a real act of statesmanship to keep them pulling in the same direction. Where the two organs come under separate ministers the problem is usually compounded by inadequate co-operation between them. Often, both are involved in the estimates process but the required linkage of efforts required in the process is missing or minimal. Moreover both are occasionally separately involved in the field review of development projects without any visible signs of effective co-ordination of these efforts. A more difficult problem stemming from the position of the Ministry of Economic Planning, however, is afforded by that ministry's role as a co-ordinator of sectoral plans of other ministries. Its task in national planning is essentially *co-ordinative*. Yet it has not the final authority in interministerial disputes in respect to plan formulation and implementation.

The problem of insufficient co-operation between the ministries of Finance and of Economic Planning where the two are separate may be reduced by more use of joint budget hearings, by the effective use of interministerial development committees, and by assigning responsibility for monitoring and reviewing implementation of projects to one of them exclusively (preferably to the Ministry of Planning) which agency should then be required to submit regular reports to the others, on the physical and financial stages of the projects. The remedy to the other problems of the Ministry of Planning's insufficient authority to co-ordinate sectoral plans is also usually sought in organisational terms. The Head of Government is typically made the chairman of national development planning and review commissions, with the Minister responsible for economic planning as the vice-chairman and often in reality as the working chairman. This arrangement ordinarily leads to fewer problems when this minister is recognized as the number two man in the government or is professionally accepted as the best authority available in matters of national economic development. In the last resort, however, a final solution is found more in human terms than in organisational devices.

Monitoring Development

The analysis so far leaves us with the problem of the unbusiness-like monitoring of implementation of development projects.

Monitoring of projects (carried out *during* the implementation of

the projects), normally being internal to the projects concerned, should be the primary responsibility of the functional ministry and its field staff. There is therefore a need for the staff of the Ministry to be adequately trained to provide the needed information on time. But this is not always the case in most of the civil services studied.

Even where the Department monitoring of projects is reasonably effective, there would appear to be a need for additional structural arrangement to be set up or identified centrally to keep the Secretary to the President abreast of performance of the civil service as a whole and to draw attention to shortcomings in the implementation of government projects and policy decisions. As a device for dealing with this difficulty, the "Central Operations Room" concept appears to be gradually establishing its viability in Malaysia and other places. According to the concept, a follow-up system should be organised whereby, in a Central Operations Room located in the office of the President, the physical progress and financial expenditure on each of the key projects (especially industrial and agricultural projects) of the Government are graphically depicted in relation to their established targets. The operational analysis of the data is submitted to the Cabinet through the Head of Government for action to be taken. The success of such monitoring or feedback system depends a great deal on the feedback provided by the government on the Operations Room's recommendations.

The Ministerial Type of Organisation

As already mentioned, for the purpose of formulating and implementing plans and policies, all the African countries studied have their civil services organised essentially on the basis of ministries, that is, on a *functional* basis. The question that comes to mind then is whether this pattern of organising government business is the most appropriate for achieving rapid and sustained economic development. Before this question is delved into, perhaps a description of the structure may be in order.

Ordinarily, ministries have departments working under and to them. While the former are primarily concerned with policy-making as already alluded to, the latter are there largely to translate the policies into concrete actions and physical projects directly, even though their advice is often sought in the preparation of policy proposals. Most of the departments have a chain of command from the headquarters through provinces to districts. Superimposed on

these extensions of departments, in the field, is a network of provincial and district organisations commonly referred to as the "Field Administration". These serve not only as the chief official directors and co-ordinators of central government activities in the field but also as the main channels of communication between the government and the populace.

Each ministry is headed administratively by a Permanent Secretary. Typically, this chief administrative officer is immediately assisted by a hierarchy of other officers of an Administrative Class, the most senior of whom (in the ministry) usually occupies a position equivalent to that of a professional head of a department and is often charged with responsibility for the internal management of the ministry. On the next level are several lower-level administrative "Secretaries", with the more senior ones controlling a division, which deals with a major aspect of the ministry's business. These divisions are, in turn, composed of branches manned by officers of the Executive Class, who normally exercise supervision over members of the clerical and secretarial classes. The vertical line of authority is linked horizontally by common services and advisory branches like those of personnel, finance (or accounting) and general branches. In addition, where professional (i.e. specialist) staff are employed in a non-technical ministry, they are generally in staff positions to either the minister or his chief administrative officer. Thus, the line and staff principle is applied to ministerial organisation, with the supporting and professional staff offering advice to the line authority for management.

Departments are by and large staffed by specialists who are, of course, supported by common service and advisory units. The department is typically headed by a Director—a professional—who, in that position, is expected, in spite of his professional background, to make the management of the operations of the department his main preoccupation rather than the use of technical or professional skills.

Problems of the Bureaucratic Structure

Whatever the roles of the various ministries and departments might be, together they constitute a *functional* organisation of government. That is, they are based on their portfolios of responsibility and the skills specialisation of their staff. Such functional organisations offer advantages, especially in utilising skilled manpower and other

resources and in ensuring continuity of operations that remain largely unchanged. However, this pattern of organising government business is weak in certain respects, particularly in responding to changing and complex situations. It is resistant to change, emphasizes separate functional elements at the expense of the total organisation, and discourages collateral relationships. Specifically, the most objectionable features of the ministerial pattern include :

- (a) the arrangement of the activities and duties in a *fixed* way on the principle of a hierarchy of superior and subordinate levels;
- (b) the pervasiveness of the use of general rules in the arrangement of the office;
- (c) the practice of sending matters for decision up the hierarchy to go through a large number of intervening levels; and
- (d) inability to acquire adequate information for public policy making.

The quest, then, is for flexible structures. Yet hierarchy is, in some form, unavoidable in all complex organisations. The need for hierarchy in large-scale organisations in developed countries is generally acknowledged.⁶ Hierarchy is necessary for co-ordination necessitated by specialisation, for settling conflicts and for communication of orders or information. Herbert H.A. Simon gives reasons for believing that all complex systems should generally be hierarchical. As he argues, hierarchical structure of statutes arises from the differential needs, interests, and capacities of individuals in the organisation. The relative difficulty of tasks to be performed is usually decided on the basis of how many people can or cannot cope with them effectively since tasks are not of equal difficulty and require different levels of capacity and skills, and also since many tasks are interdependent and the performance of a higher order job requires the overseeing of dependent low level jobs, hierarchy will be required to ensure desirable performance.⁷

There is nothing in the nature of African countries to make us believe that, once organisations reach a certain size and complexity hierarchy will not appear.

⁶ Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston, 1967, pp. 49-59.

⁷ Herbert H.A. Simon, *Administrative Behaviour*, 2nd edition, Free Press, N.Y. 1957.

If hierarchy cannot be eliminated in any complex organisation, what intelligent modifications can be made to it to enable it to adapt more readily to changes in the organisation's environment? Increased decentralization of authority is clearly one such strategy, the intention being to place more emphasis on positions in the field, so that a higher proportion of decisions affecting clients can be made at points closer to them. This may mean creating better pay and perks for those serving in the field, giving them preference in matters pertaining to their professional development, and arranging for better schooling for their children since such field postings often meet resistance in view of the notorious preferences of officials to serve at the centre rather than in the field. Decentralization can, however, be effectively carried out only as far as the supply of trained and competent staff permits.

Hierarchy can also be modified by the use of task forces, projects teams or more commonly, the project management system. This is a system whereby various skills requirements can be brought together from ministries and departments in task forces to design and carry out projects. The teams are temporary groups existing only until the project is completed. Then the members revert to their normal places in the organisation. The duties and activities are not allocated in any fixed or permanent way. This design provides more fluidity in solving problems than is typically afforded by the traditional functional structure. It allows various specialised skills and resources to be drawn from several parts of the service to form a problem-solving team, and apply their special abilities to the project.

R.S. Milne recommends this device as particularly useful in the following types of situations:

Where substantially new policies are being undertaken or where technological advance has been rapid, where the number of officials is small enough not to demand the erection of a fullscale hierarchy; where many of the officials are technical men with professional loyalties and resistant to the claims of hierarchy.⁸

African countries are urged to explore the possibility of making use of this organisational strategy in their administrations, especially

² R.S. Milne, *Bureaucracy and Development Admin.*, Public Admin. (Brit), vol. 51, no. 2, Winter 1973, p. 417.

in the fields of agriculture, rural development and capital works. It must be remembered that although project teams may form a useful addition to the normal hierarchy, they do not replace it; they depend upon it for technical and logistical support. Committees organised on the lines of task forces also modify hierarchy by fostering horizontal communication, but they can easily proliferate and become a device for helping to postpone decisions.

Another strategy for making hierarchy more adaptive to its environment is, paradoxically, the creation of additional hierarchies in the form of largely autonomous local government institutions or public enterprises, outside the central bureaucracy, in the hope that the new hierarchies—accorded certain immunities from strict governmental control—can be more flexible. But African experience in such local government units has not generally been a happy one, largely because of central government's fear of opponents using the device to create independent centres of power to challenge it, as well as because the human resources in the form of trained manpower are insufficient to support an adequate system of the "autonomous" local government in addition to a central government. Public corporations may be set up by the government to carry out a commercial type of function or to provide a public utility. But if too many of them are established within a short time (as in the Sudan), it might be impossible for them to have the privilege and exemption accorded a few.

Multiple Clearances

A less difficult problem than that of adapting hierarchy to its environment is a tendency (especially in Nigeria) for matters to be considered at too many successive levels of government hierarchy. The problem can of course be met by diminishing the number of levels or by arranging for the number of levels at which a question is considered to be reduced. The former line of action is obviously, in theory, the easier but in practice it comes up against difficulties because members of the (rank-in-person) classes are always lobbying for more grades to be created so that their career progression within the class can be a life-time affair. The latter may be achieved by arranging for subordinate executive and lower level staff to be bypassed in the line of decision and for papers for substantive action to be channelled direct to responsible Assistant Secretaries or Under Secretaries in the ministry.

Rules

Another main objective to bureaucracy in African countries is that its clients are generally unaccustomed to the notion of forming a queue in order to have applied to them rules which they do not perceive to be unique to their situations. Indeed, quite a few of the first generation of African politicians tended to regard formal rules in administration as unnecessary because such rules can retard decision-making, because they can stifle initiative and adaptability to environmental changes, and because, by their nature, rules lag behind development.

But, as every administrator knows, rules are necessary in every human organisation, including government. Rules set parameters to the types and extent of decisions that can be taken in the organisation; they provide standards for evaluating the behaviour of the employees; and they facilitate co-ordination within the organisation.

The important question to answer then is not whether rules are necessary but what kind of rules should exist and how should they be applied to meet the needs of the clients.

Quite rightly, almost all the bureaucracies studied either have revised the General Orders or Standing Orders bequeathed to them at independence or are in the process of doing so, in order to purge them all vestiges of colonialism. What needs further to be done though is for the revised editions of the administrative instructions to be made easily accessible to a wider section of the bureaucracies as well as for a review committee to be set up for bringing the instructions up to date from time to time.

Amendment of the rules has invariably confirmed the "axiom" that rules cannot be made to cater for every eventuality because not all exigencies can be anticipated. By their nature, rules have to deal with generalities and should be so designed as to give general direction and allow room for discretion, the amount of discretion permitted depending at least in part on the degree of commitment of the employees to the basic values of their organisation and their intellectual ability to analyse a situation objectively.

The rural problem however often occurs either in the interpretation of the rules or in assessing when conditions exist for their application or breach. To obviate rigid adherence to rules a feature that is all too common in African bureaucracies—there is need to ensure that officials understand the principles or rationale behind the rules. That way comes flexibility. It is only then that the officials

will know if and when it is in the public interest to break a specific rule.

Wider Information and Analytical Base for Policy-making

The ministries in the public services of Africa are also by and large characterized by certain features which do not make for the full utilization of available information for public policy-making. First, much policy evaluation and development takes place in administrative agencies where administrators operating current policy dealing with high-level casework and ministerial matters have been expected to find time to write papers on future policy. Often, however, daily pressure of the ministerial cases, the necessity of attending committee meetings simply to show the flag for the ministry, ministerial preoccupation with the short-term crises and the expedient, all drive out adequate considerations of future policy. In other words, the permanent secretary does not have time to reflect on long range plans for his ministry. Secondly, the expertise of the professionals ("specialists") is not sufficiently utilized in policy making because of truncations in their career structure and their limited accessibility to the political actors. Thirdly, as already described a typical ministry in a relatively large African country normally has three auxilliary units, personnel, finance or accounts, and General Services Branches—to support or provide service to the administrators and specialists engaged on policy-making in the organisation. But the sum total of a personnel officer's work in the ministry hardly merits the name personnel management; in particular, activities connected with career development and staff welfare (including human relations) can barely be discerned; the finance branches seem to be primarily concerned with book-keeping drills, and the General Services Branch usually encompasses any matter which the authorities find difficult to classify under the other two staff branches. This situation is unsatisfactory from the point of view of staff development as well as long-term planning and control of manpower and expenditure.

A suggestion that is occasionally proposed for solving the difficulty of inadequate analysis of long-term problems is to transform the post of Permanent Secretary into a committee on the lines of the French ministerial cabinet.

Without a single official head like the permanent secretary, a French ministry is normally divided into a number of directorates

each headed by a director who is responsible for the administration of his unit. The minister in charge of the ministry would appoint personal assistants, made up of both civil servants and non-civil servants, mostly on the basis of their acquaintance with the influential political "actors", to constitute his cabinet. It is the job of this cabinet to co-ordinate the work of his ministry for him and generally to assist him in his political and administrative roles. It is through this ministerial cabinet that the minister administers his ministry.

The functions of the cabinet are generally four-fold, namely, to maintain the relationship between the minister and the constituency he represents; to attend to matters concerning his relations with parliament and the press; to provide the necessary research, information and advice required for the formulation of ministerial policy; and to see to the execution of the minister's general policy within the ministry.

The minister's cabinet is headed by a Director de Cabinet, with very wide legal powers, who can deputise for the minister in political and administrative matters of the ministry.

In the existing African setting, the first function of the ministerial cabinet is performed by a minister's personal assistant (where he exists) who is usually a political party functionary with no special professional expertise. The second and fourth are primarily problems for the Permanent Secretary and the Heads of Department under his ministry to solve. As regards the third function, the typical African minister obtains his advice for policy-making almost wholly from his permanent secretary with very little professional input from political sources. This is clearly inadequate in the light of the demands on his political mandate. There would appear to be a need for him to be provided with more expertise outside the single chain of command. Provision of research and information for policy-making is manifestly and woefully inadequate in ministries.

Yet the French model of organising the top echelons of a ministry is not recommended for adoption by African bureaucracies. The reasons are three-fold. One is that the reservoir of professional staff or experts required to constitute such a cabinet on full-time basis may be not ordinarily available in most African countries. Another is that there are hardly any independent sources of information on the government outside it, to be used by the experts as basis for independent advice to the minister. Furthermore, there is a risk in that

system, of the ministers isolating themselves from the officers in the ministry and working entirely through the cabinet.⁹ Finally, the cost of maintaining such an outfit may be relatively prohibitive by African standards.

The fact, however, remains that there is a structural vacuum in the ministry as far as studies of long-term policy and the provision of a planning system for internal management are concerned.

A more amenable solution would seem to be the establishment of policy planning units in the ministries which should be concerned with studies of new and long-term policy options and alternative programmes, the preparation of long-term plans, and the study of the administrative effectiveness of the ministry. For this proposal to be meaningful, however, there should exist also an effective Ministry of Economic Planning. Each of the Planning Units would be responsible, within the ministry, to a policy steering group under the chairmanship of the administrative head and including the most senior officials on both the operational staff sides. The role of the group should be to determine the policy planning programme in consultation with ministers in order to trigger off particular policy planning exercises, to ensure that the appropriate planning machinery exists for the job in hand, and to receive and review the results prior to their being submitted where appropriate, to ministers. It will essentially be the function of the policy planning unit to service the steering group, to take the lead in preparing material and to maintain co-ordination of planning efforts in the ministry.

It is also suggested that, to make far greater effectiveness in ministerial action, the corporate staff units—Personnel, Finance and General Services Branches—of a ministry should respectively be *gradually converted over a number of years into*:

- (a) a personnel *division*, concerned with the working environment, conditions of employment, as well as the planning and development of the human resources of the organisation. The staff relations functions should include attention to staff consultations, provision of adequate machinery for consultation and negotiation with staff, and specific arrangements for raising morale;

⁹ K.A. Owusu-Ansah, "Restructuring the Central Bureaucracy in Ghana" *op. cit.*, p. 16.

- (b) a control *division*, concerned with preparing annual budgets applying budgetary control systems, monitoring the implementation of ministerial policy decisions and annual development programmes, as well as being responsible for ensuring the flow of money to the ministry, and supervising the application of service-wide regulations on expenditure; and
- (c) a management services *division*, responsible for satisfying the twin objectives of providing a focus for innovation and of assisting with the development of the means for monitoring and controlling *structural* and *procedural* efficiency of the ministry.

It needs to be stressed however, that the training of staff in personnel administration, financial management and budgeting as well as management services skills takes time. As a result, no visible results by way of accomplished personnel administrators, financial managers or budget analysts, or management analysts are expected immediately.

Accessibility of and Career Structure for Specialists

The final problem in the general area of making relevant information available to ministers for public policy making, it will be recalled, is the twin one of inadequate participation of specialists in policy formulation and the relative exclusion, in some countries, of such top personnel from appointment as permanent secretaries in the ministries. Obviously, the former difficulty can be removed by allowing top specialists in the ministry direct access to the minister to enable them share more fully in the task of policy formulation, provided that, in each instance, the Permanent Secretary is briefed (either before or immediately after) as to what transpired at the meeting with the minister. As regards the career structure for the specialists, it is suggested that, as far as possible recruitment to top administrative posts should be open to both specialists and generalists, the key criteria for selection being demonstrated managerial competence, as well as reasonable knowledge of the working of the government machinery; that opportunity should be given early (say after a few years' service) to specialists to acquire managerial skills formally, preferably in local training institutions, before they reach the top echelons of their departments; and that specialists heading departments, who qualify for consideration to the post of permanent secretary but who would not like to be so considered because of their

deep commitment to their profession, may be compensated by being offered emoluments comparable to those of the permanent secretary.

Conclusion

We have attempted in the foregoing analysis to discuss and suggest various changes that could be considered and implemented in order to bring about the necessary changes in:

- (a) the main leadership structures for providing central guidance in policy-making and planning as well as;
- (b) the structures for formulating and implementing *sector* policies and plans if any meaningful improvement is expected to take place in the performance of the civil services of English-speaking countries in Africa.

In most of these African States, the organisation and structure of the system within which the administrator functions are outdated and incompatible with principles and practices of modern "development administration". To continue with the old system of administrative organisation and structure would be like fitting old vintage motor car engine into the latest design of modern vehicles. The situation therefore, calls for drastic reappraisal of the organisation and structure of the public services of the institutions of training and orientation within them, and for the application of research to policies of reform and modernisation. The object of any reformation in this regard would be to ensure that modern machinery of government for the exercise of public administrative functions is established which is capable of matching the requirements of modern government. It should also have within it the means by which developments can take place to match the political, economic and social situations of the country which the machinery serves.

Chapter 7

Organization for Managing Development at the Local Level

In the preceding chapter, we noted that the business of government cannot be wholly performed from the centre, some of it would have to be taken care of from intermediate and lower level organs. This is particularly so in Africa. In this chapter we shall be discussing why the need to use levels other than the centre in managing development is acute in Africa; the approaches or patterns adopted; and finally propose an approach to effective local administration in the context of the African environment.

The Need for Decentralization

The activities of a modern government have become so diverse and complex, so big in scope the world over, that even in the smallest of States, government business cannot be conducted through the use of monolithic unified organisations. Consequently, the division of government business along functional and territorial lines, is not only desirable but necessary.

The following are, amongst others, the major reasons which compel governments, especially African governments, to decentralize authority and responsibility to lower level organs.

Efficiency Consideration

An important reason which makes the division of power and responsibilities along territorial lines desirable is the need for efficiency in government operations. Centralizing decision-making in many countries would cause unnecessary costs and delays as illustrated by the following example drawn from a United Nations study on decentralization .

First on delays and some of the consequences, approval at the highest level may be required before even minor actions can be taken. For example, expenses vouchers may have to be signed by directors or even by ministers before payment can be made; appointments of even the lowest grades of personnel may have to be cleared through the office of the head of executive, expensive engineering machinery may lie idle for lack of spare parts which await headquarters approval; equipment may not be moved to another district for urgent purposes without permission from the capital.

There may be uneconomic distribution of supplies, as an example from the Sudan indicates. Shoes made in Fasher (Darfur Province) were sent 373 miles by road to Obeid, and then another 430 miles by rail to Khartoum where the whole supply was concentrated. When Fasher wanted shoes for school children and government employees, they had to be ordered from Khartoum.

Overcentralization may lead to occurrence of goal displacement, arising out of too strict adherence to directives without regard for the reasons behind their adoption in the first place.

Wastefulness may result out of the fact that centrally made decisions may tend to lack requisite information which is necessary to make any decision/action effective. This may be particularly so, where there is no lateral co-ordination among agencies. The United Nations study cited earlier, gives more illustrations of the wastage that can result from lack of co-ordination :

- (a) dams were built by one Ministry of Works to make water available for irrigation at locations where Ministry of Agriculture soil surveys already had shown that the land was not suited to this use;
- (b) the plans of one ministry to build a new housing estate on a particular site were well advanced when it was discovered that another ministry's plans to turn the same area into a reservoir were equally well advanced.

Practical Considerations

Many of the African countries are vast in territory and diverse in climate and topography. It would be impossible to administer and plan for the development of such countries, without breaking them down into some form of region, province or district. A country like

the Sudan, for example, is roughly seven times the size of Germany, and has about three climatic conditions, including desert, semi-temperate and tropical. To try to administer such a country strictly from the capital Khartoum would be next to impossible.

In addition to the vastness, many countries have great diversities in their peoples. Some, such as Tanzania, have over one hundred ethnic groups, each group having its own customs and ways of life and its own orientation to development. A unitary or uniform approach to managing such a diverse people, would be difficult. There is a need, therefore, to work out organisational and procedural arrangements which might accommodate such factors.

The combination of size and small population densities, which is typical of many African countries is an additional factor affecting the administration and management of the development of these countries. These two factors bear heavily on the potentiality for the development of the transport and communication systems of these countries. Vastness in size and sparse population distribution does not in any way aid the establishment of economic means of transportation—since few people and few goods will tend to move along the road or railway networks so established.

Examples of the transport problems faced by these countries include the following: in the Sudan, for example, the 2700 mile railway line links only the main towns of the northern and central parts of the country. Slower river steamers operate on limited reaches of the river. In Tanzania, the three railway lines, covering more than 2,000 miles, connect only a total of 11 out of the 20 provincial capitals. In the same country, three provinces are not accessible during the rainy season, except by air transport. Given such a state of affairs, it is almost inevitable that decisional-loci on some aspects of government business, especially those relating to development, will be away from the centre.

Other Considerations

Besides the above two considerations, some governments have taken decisions to locate decision-making authority and responsibility on some aspects of government business, at intermediate and local levels, in order to provide for participation by the people in decision-making on matters which effect them. This can either be because of an ideological commitment to participation, or may be functional. The functionalist argument runs along the following

lines: whilst recognizing the fact that African countries have to operate on inadequate resources, it is nevertheless argued that the resources that are available, especially at the locality are generally not optimally exploited. The cause of this under-exploitation is the failure to involve the population fully in the development process. The noted reluctance by the local population to follow technical advice, to part with their resources etc. is not due to their being irrational, but to a personal choice since, under conditions of non-participation in decision-making and planning, it is not clear as to why they should accept advice or part with their resources. Restructuring the decision-making process in a manner which facilitates the involvement of the local man and thereby giving him some insight into and participation in national planning, would make him more willing to accept advice and to part with his resources. This situation would, in turn, make it possible for the government to plan realistically, since ideas and details of local society, which have until then been out of view, would be accessible to planners.

The inclusion of a participative element in decision-making may, however, be functional in a non-extractionist sense. By allowing for participation in local decision-making, governments may be able to allay or disperse dangerous frustrations which may otherwise lead to disintegrative political directions on the part of the citizenry. This measure would provide a safety valve for such actions.

The ideological case for locating decision-making authority and responsibility to lower based organs and providing for participation therein, is concerned with enhancing the principles of human dignity, popular sovereignty and other ethics of democracy in communities. It is viewed, on the other hand, as a means to greater protection of citizen rights and a method for guaranteeing an improvement in their condition. On the other hand, it is an end, that is "it provides the dignity and psychological satisfaction of having a share in the control of one's environment and the structure of power". This view of decentralization, is held by the advocates of political and institutional decentralization, those who would wish to see local institutions turned into some kind of political entities. They view grassroot democracy as the best way to ensure equitable allocation of resources in a society. To them participation is an indicator of political development, which is an essential concomitant to economic development.

Arguments Against Locating Decision-loci at Intermediate and Lower Levels

In spite of the strong arguments posed in support of decentralization, the governments of many African countries seem to be reluctant to adopt decentralized administrative structures, especially those that provide for participation. The organizational structures for local administration which they adopt, instead of allowing for maximum local autonomy tend to centralize even very simple, purely local functions. Thus, primary education, feeder roads and dispensaries are administered by central governments rather than the local authorities. Even when some governments have taken steps to decentralize such activities, performance by the recipient organisations has been disappointing, necessitating a reimposition of central controls and, ultimately, even the elimination of local governments in these countries. What accounts for this situation?

One explanation, most noticeably identified with Fred Riggs, but in no sense shared by him alone, attributes these governments' reluctance to decentralize and the poor performance when occasionally they decentralize, to the general underdeveloped character of these countries, or what Riggs calls their prismatic conditions.¹ Riggs' explanation begins by analysing the factors which have propelled the adoption of decentralized administrative structures and those that have facilitated its success in developed countries. They include; first, a high degree of national identity and established central authority making it difficult for lateral conflicts and/or vertical conflicts to assume proportions which can threaten the inviolability of the nation/state. Second, the relative richness of the countries, making it possible for resources for financing essential central governmental functions to be available and, at the same time, still allowing the localities to tax themselves sufficiently to fund local functions. Finally, it has worked well because of a clear demarcation of the policy and programme areas, and, therefore a demarcation of authority and responsibility between the centre and the localities.

These attributes are critically absent in many African societies. Level of national identity is low, many communities do not feel either a common identity with members of other communities in the country, and at times do not quite accept the centre's authority over them. Creation of autonomous local government in such circum-

¹ Fred Riggs; *Administration in Developing Countries*, McGraw Hill (New York) 1963, pp. 210-213.

stances would give legal sanction and legitimize regional or perhaps irrendentist tendencies, thereby weakening the already fragile national identity and unity. The tendency, therefore, will be for national governments to structurally neutralize the problem by de-emphasizing the divisions and emphasizing the points of unity. On the question of the level of available resources, definitely, developing countries face a tougher situation than industrialized countries. Resources are in critical supply both at the centre and in the localities and most localities find themselves dependent upon the centre for most of their financial needs. Conflict over the allocation of scarce resources, therefore, tends to exacerbate the search for national cohesion and inhibits the emergence of firm structures of national authority.

And, finally, more often than not, there is rarely a clear demarcation of the area of central control and those subject to control by the localities, since governments rarely formulate comprehensive policies in the first place. Central government policy makers may first adopt unrealistic goals, assigning new responsibilities to subordinate bodies without commensurate grants of authority and resources. When subordinate authorities fail to perform as desired, the centre may react by attempting to make specific decisions within the sphere of competence of the local authorities. Hence the recipients of authority discover that they cannot really make the policy choices they thought they were authorized to make.

In these circumstances and given the urgency of improving these countries economic conditions, as we indicated earlier, the central governments of African countries find themselves, having to initiate and to manage the bulk of the activities needed to accelerate social and economic development. This is so, in spite of our observation earlier, that in order to develop, African countries will have to adopt a relative measure of decentralization in the management of development. So African countries find themselves facing a dilemma. In order to develop rapidly they need to decentralize, but in order to decentralize effectively they need a relative amount of development. How is this dilemma to be resolved?

Towards an Approach to Viable Decentralization

So far we have noted that despite the obvious need and urgency for decentralization, the adverse consequences on the governance and development process which might accompany, or in some cases, has

accompanied decentralization (especially devolution) have made most African governments approach decentralization cautiously. In the future the search for approaches to viable decentralization will have to continue and this search will have to learn a lot from past attempts.

What approaches to decentralization have been adopted by African countries and which of these have the greatest potential for viability? To put the same question differently, how have most African countries approached the issue of confronting the major constraints to viable decentralization and which approach seem to be most effective?

Earlier on, we noted several major constraints to the emergence of viable decentralized system in Africa. They include the general underdeveloped character of the African countries; the low or poor levels of national unity and identity; the poor financial resource base (nationally and at the local level), the non-availability of skilled manpower, especially at the local level. A viable system of decentralization, therefore, would be one which reduces the incidence of these problems, while at the same time maximizing the incidence of the positive attributes of decentralization, also noted earlier.

(i) The first constraint to viable decentralization is a long term one, and its resolution is tied to the attainment of the objective for which we are adopting decentralization in the first place: the attainment of accelerated national development. In the short-run very little can be done about it and it is, therefore, not useful to discuss it at this juncture.

(ii) The second constraint—the low levels of national unity and identity—has been tackled in a number of ways. Many of them have adopted decentralization system which tend to constrain the expression of irrendentist and fissiparous tendencies. Since one facet of the problem posed under this area involves an uncertainty by the centre over whether autonomous areas may not challenge the centre's authority some governments have tended to resolve it by allowing local decision-making in decisional areas which the centre feels are not critical, or locating trusted central government agents in key positions of local decision-making. The approaches adopted can be grouped under four patterns:

The first which we shall call *Comprehensive Local Government System*, borrowing terminology from the United Nations Study, cited earlier involves the administering of all government services through

multipurpose local authorities. A concept of substantial unity of purpose among representative bodies at all levels underlies the system. Local authorities perform most functions pursuant to general statutory authority and others on behalf of central ministries. The distinguishing feature of this system is that local authorities, rather than field units of central ministries, render all socio-economic services that reach the individual. Among the countries studied, Ghana, Malawi and some states in Nigeria have something approaching it, with a difference (in the case of Ghana) in respect to the fact that the officials of the local authorities are central government employees on secondment.

The second pattern called the *Integrated Administrative Approach*, is at the other extreme. Under this pattern, central government agencies directly administer all technical services, with central government area co-ordinators and district administrators being responsible for field co-ordination. Such rural local authorities as exist have little or no control over government activities and staff in their areas. They are left to deal with mainly traditional functions. This is the pattern obtaining in Sierra Leone and Swaziland and, outside the countries we are studying, includes most of French West Africa. It is the approach preferred by countries which follow a centralizing approach to planning.

A variant of this approach complements the integrated bureaucratic/technical structures at the intermediate, district and local levels with a series of policy-type, politically dominated development committees. Whilst retaining at the centre, ultimate responsibility for all governmental functions a great measure of decision-making powers and responsibilities relating to implementation is delegated to the intermediate and local integrated organisation, with the prefect at each level playing a dominant role in decision-making. The system also provides for the clearing by the development committees, of the development proposals put up by the technical/bureaucratic integrated agencies at each level, before such proposals are submitted to the succeeding level and then to the centre for final approval and incorporation into a national plan document.

From the point of view of national integration, the approach has several advantages. Firstly, it allows the localities to participate in deciding development priorities for their areas; secondly, it reduces possibilities of having local areas taking stances and especially actions, which might be in conflict with the national interest. The

approach, moreover, does aid co-ordination efforts in both the formulation and implementation of development plans, through ensuring that all development proposals are viewed in terms of their contribution to achievement of integrated development objectives, and implementation efforts are generally concerned and not sectional.

Amongst the countries studied, Tanzania's approach to decentralization seems to approximate this variant and, from accounts on the functioning of the system in that country, the system's potential as a contributor to the resolution or at least the amelioration of the problems of national integration seem to be borne out.² The system does indeed provide an opportunity for local expression without such expression becoming disintegrative.

The third approach is the *Partnership* system. Under this system some services are rendered directly by field units of central agencies, while other services are performed by local authorities. The system is distinguished by the fact that ultimate authority and responsibility in respect to the autonomous functions, are vested in an elected representative body and the functionaries are responsible to this body. There might be potential, therefore, for the expression of fissiparous tendencies. But such potential cannot easily be expressed through the actions of councils in respect to the autonomous functions, since many other local functions are still performed by central government field units, and indeed even in the performance of many of their own autonomous functions, local authorities need the support of central government field units. No local area may, therefore, take decisions that are against the centre, with impunity. Examples of countries, which have adopted the pattern include Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Western Nigeria. In Kenya, however, the performance by the local authorities became so disappointing that the centre transferred most of its functions and powers to field units of central government agencies. Local authorities now exist only in name.

The fourth approach to decentralization is the *Dual System*. In this system, central ministries administer technical services directly, with local authorities having autonomy legally to perform local services and to do what they can to foster local development, but actually

² For a review of this aspect, see R. Baguma, *Decentralization and National Planning: A Review of Tanzania's Experiences*. M.Z. Dissertation submitted to University of Dar-es-Salaam, 1974.

performing few, if any, technical functions. Separateness and conflict rather than unity or co-operation characterize relationships between central government and local authorities. Local government, under this system, acts more as an instrument of facilitating the expression of central local or sectional interests than of social and economic development. The closest example to this approach amongst the countries being studied is Swaziland's diarchical system; except that in the case of Swaziland the duality continues right to the centre. The role of the chiefs in some West African countries may be likened to this situation.

The system has the least potential as a facilitator to national integration, and it would tend to compound the problems of national integration if adopted in countries with fragile national unity.

From the foregoing review, it seems that amongst the four patterns the approach to decentralization which has the greatest chance of viability with little potential for exacerbating the problems of integration is the integrated administrative system coupled with a development committee system. Whilst allowing for local decision-making only as inputs into the ultimate comprehensive national decision-making system, thus, the ultimate decision, though finally made at the centre, will to an extent possible try to take into account, the individual decisions of the local areas.

The approach has its costs, however, since the "principals" in decision-making at each level are bureaucrats, the ultimate decisions at each level are essentially decisions of locally-based bureaucrats, which might not necessarily be representative of local opinion. This is especially more so, since with deconcentration, the quality of bureaucrats and technical staff at intermediate and local levels improves, which further increases the gap in knowledge and abilities between them and the local politicians who sit on the committees. The chances for the latter being dominated are thereby increased. This problem cannot be easily resolved. It can, however, be ameliorated by increasing the number of "informed" people on the development committees.

Another problem, is that the many steps through which proposals have to pass before finally being adopted may occasion a lot of delay. The adverse effects of this problem may be reduced, however, by subjecting to review by upper levels, decisions on certain issues only and allowing for final decision-making at each level on many other

issues. With regard to development projects, for example, projects which require financing below a certain mark-up may be decided on by each level.

The third constraint to the evolution of viable decentralization systems is the problem relating to *inadequate financial resources* base and soundness.

These problems are, to a certain extent, shared by all local administrations irrespective of the approach employed in decentralizing. Indeed, these problems are faced by the centre as well. The magnitude and intensity of the problem will, however, differ somewhat depending on the pattern of decentralization adopted in each country. For example, the problems of co-ordinating the budgets and plans of field services on an area basis and of field services having to get the approval of one or more ministries in the capital for even minor expenditures are more likely to exist, in the dual system of decentralization, and where ministries administer most direct services and do not have common field areas respectively. Countries with an integrated administrative system, such as Tanzania, are better able to deconcentrate financial operations to the same areas as field service areas, thus simplifying financial aspects of field operations. However, over-centralization of financial decisions on the horizontal level, may nevertheless be a problem in such a system. In countries with a comprehensive local government system the main problems are likely to relate to the taxing powers of local authorities, formulae for grants to supplement local resources and methods of satisfying central and local interests in the formulation and execution of local authority budgets. Partnership systems may face problems relating to giving grants-in-aid for specific functions or for purposes of aiding the not-too-well-off local authorities. A major problem area, however, relates to the type of arrangements in financing local administration which will reconcile the needs for financial powers at the local level to permit initiative and adaptation of programmes to local circumstances, with the need for ensuring that limited resources will be used for purposes consistent with national goals and objectives.

Financing arrangements which are intended to maximize the former goal would tend to allow a lot of autonomy in revenue extraction to local areas, local areas would have a lot of freedom in deciding on the types and rates of taxation, to the extent that, well-off areas, if they are also "development-oriented", would be able to sink

a lot of resources into local development projects. The poorer and underdeveloped areas, without a great capacity to tax themselves and the orientation to do so would under such circumstances, be condemned to stagnation.³

Financial arrangements which are intended to maximize the latter goal, (national integration) would tend to be restrictive on the extent of autonomy in revenue generation and utilization allowed the local authorities. In many African countries the trend seems to be in the direction of restrictive authority in the area to the extent that, in many of the countries, local authorities are now almost totally dependent on the centre. In Tanzania, for example, the decentralized system mentioned earlier, is not allowed to generate any revenue of its own or take independent decisions on utilization. All such powers are vested in the National Parliament. In Swaziland, the urban authorities complained of having to beg the centre for all their finances. In Kenya, the graduated personal tax, which was the main source of local authority revenue, was abolished when the centre took over responsibility for most local authority functions. A formula ought to be found which will allow the local authorities to exercise initiative in raising resources while at the same time ensuring that the local authorities which are not too-well-off are aided by the centre.

One approach to the resolution of this problem is the differential decentralization of authority and responsibility.⁴ This would involve grading the local authorities on the basis of capacity capability using various indicators and delegating responsibilities discriminately, with more responsibilities, authority and power being granted to the authorities with greater capacity; and less responsibilities, authority and power to the authorities with lesser capacity. Since the centre would be committed to the even development of the country, it would continue to be in charge of such responsibilities, authority

³ An illustration of the nature of the problem and the experiences of Tanzania is contained in G. Mutahaba, "Local Autonomy and National Planning: Are they Complementary?" *African Review*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1975.

⁴ The problem, however, would be obtaining agreement on a formula for grading the local authorities that would be acceptable to the politicians. The attitude of the politicians to the grading exercise might be a crucial factor therefore. In Ghana, for example, the Coussey Committee recommended something along these lines in 1949. But attempts to grade the councils were frustrated by politicians who normally did not want councils in their constituency graded low.

and powers which would not have been delegated or devolved in the areas where capacity is low.

But even when the above is done, the latitude that is presently allowed the local authorities regarding the types and levels of taxes to be imposed is, in many of the countries, very distressing. In some of the countries, the local authorities can impose three main types of taxes: (i) taxes on persons, which may range from a flat pool tax to a graduated income tax, (ii) taxes on production and expenditure, such as taxes on slaughter or sale of animals, and market and produce levies; (iii) property taxes assessed in some way. In some of the countries, as already pointed out, the tax imposed on persons was either abolished by central government or the proceeds were taken over by the centre. In Tanzania, for example, the tax was simply abolished in 1969 mainly as a political move. There is evidence that in many of the local authorities it was proving very expensive to administer.

Governments must be a little more supportive and come to the aid of the local authorities in the collection of the range of taxes allowed them, but, more still, they should increase the range of taxes which local authorities are allowed to impose to include such taxes as sales or purchase taxes as is presently the case in some industrialized countries. To avoid the problems of expensive collection efforts, a formula may be found whereby the centre, which in many countries has a greater capacity, collects the tax and then shares it with the respective local authorities.

Where the proceeds of certain categories of taxes are to be shared between the centre and the local authorities, however, the responsibility for collection should be vested in the local area as an incentive to the local authority. A further measure along these lines, may include linking the formulae for sharing the proceeds to the local authority's collection effort, awarding a greater percentage of the revenues to the local authority, where its collection has exceeded a set standard.

There is, however, still a lot that can be done by the local authorities to increase the yield of existing sources of revenues, and thereby increase their financial capabilities. They should take steps to make revenue collectors more vigilant and honest. One way may be to put the collectors on a sharp incentive (bonus) system, which would be tied to their collection efforts. They ought to bring their nominal rolls to date in order to avoid the great incidence of non-

assessment; by assisting in the use of village committees or councils to help in the collection of the rates, and by using marketing co-operatives to withhold taxes when farmers sell their crops. These and many other measures may help to increase the revenues available.

Finally, local authorities may increase their financial soundness, by changing their orientation in financial administration, in the short-term at least from the current consumptionist pattern of local expenditure to a pattern geared more to the provision of investment projects of short-gestation periods. Several countries have encouraged their local authorities along these lines. In Kenya, for example, Nairobi City Council derives much of its revenue from investments and floating of stock, and in Zambia, local authorities have been encouraged to set up investment corporations, either singly or in partnership with other bodies. Such efforts could indeed yield laudable results, but as we shall be discussing in a short while, many of the local authorities may not have the managerial capability required for managing such undertakings. Another major problem area that is facing the decentralized local administrations in Africa relates to the staffing of the services. In many of the countries it has not been easy to make available to local administration enough qualified staff for sustained work in small towns and rural areas. Many local administrations are not able to attract technically competent people due to several reasons.⁵ Due to the relative paucity of resources, the salaries and other benefits offered by local authorities tend to be lower than what the central government or private employers pay and provide. Where the councillors have a say in decisions of hiring and firing, the absence of security of employment would also tend not to attract the best persons on the market. Even when the pay scales are good and there is security of employment, service in remote areas, where amenities such as good schools for children, housing and recreational facilities are underdeveloped, would tend to be unattractive to technically competent people. Finally, is the fact that, once located in the rural areas, opportunities for personal advancement become limited, due to the poor flow of information on what is available and a host of other factors.

These four and other factors, therefore, combine to keep the decentralized services (including field units of central agencies) manned by people who are not as competent as those in the national

⁵ Some of the reasons which make local authorities fail to attract competent personnel, apply equally to securing personnel for central government field assignments.

capitals. Several measures may be taken to correct the situation in order to cope with the problems of the 1980s.

To deal with problems arising out of the lack of amenities in the peripheral areas, a long-term solution lies in the improvement of the quality of life throughout the country. But this is better said than done; but the solution may include introducing a system of rotation whereby personnel are transferred to congenial employment after a fixed period in hardship posts. Similarly there must be rotation between the most and the least attractive posts so that fairness to the individual is also conducive to the continuity of the programmes.

To deal with the problems of advancement and expanded opportunities, measures ought to be taken to make professional personnel in rural areas have contact with the outside world. Visit and periodic meetings ought to be encouraged by the central authorities to convey information, to learn of difficulties encountered in implementation and to maintain morale.

Financial measures might also be taken to counteract the disinclination of individuals to accept appointment in rural areas. Special allowances and grants may also be given.⁶

Salaries and salary scale should be arranged in such a way as to eliminate any financial advantage from working in the capital, and regulations regarding advancement should be changed so as to make it unnecessary to move to head quarters when promotion to higher grades takes place.

To deal with distinctive problems of attracting competent personnel to work for the local authorities, several measures may be taken, including the following. The adoption of unified local government service; the secondment of central government personnel to local authorities; the integration of authorities service systems into one service.

Under the first system, most or all the staff of the local authorities are hired by the commission. The system is currently in force in Zambia and Malawi. There may be wide variations possible in the organization and functions of the body for the unified local government service and its relationship with ministries, local authorities and staff. The common elements, however, seem to be that an independent board, established by law within the general purview of

⁶ Tanzania was once providing a hardship allowance to civil servants who were required to serve in the Southern regions. This practice, however, has now been abandoned in favour of rotation.

the ministry responsible for local government, has full power to make appointments to posts in the local government service, to transfer members of the service between posts in that service and to exercise disciplinary control over members of the service. The board may delegate its responsibilities for appointment and dismissal of certain staff, (e.g. junior staff) to the local authorities themselves, subject to the overriding principle that the final responsibility rests with the board. Local councils may recommend or even appoint staff, subject to the board's approval.

The establishment of a unified service, moreover, serves other purposes. It standardizes the qualifications and terms of service for comparable posts, facilitates the establishment of a common pension scheme, increases greatly the opportunities for a career in local government and thereby improves recruitment possibilities. It might not, however, adequately come to grips with the crucial problem of receiving only the dregs from the manpower market (against fierce competition from the private sector, the civil service and the parastatals) since the image of local government is relatively low in almost all African countries. It might, therefore, be necessary to use other efforts including the two mentioned earlier.

Secondment of central government staff to local authorities affords another means of increasing the ability of local authorities to render technical services, pending the development of their own staff for the purpose. It is also a convenient device to enable a local authority to obtain expert services in a specialized field for which permanent staffing is not required. The approach may, however, be impaired by the fact that in many cases secondment could mean relative oblivion for staff concerned and this may tend to create an unwillingness on their part.

Merging the two services may be another alternative. Under this system, the authority to appoint personnel may be decentralized up to a certain level, with central government either appointing or approving appointments beyond certain grades of staff, but the salaries and other conditions of service for posts in local authorities are basically the same as for comparable posts in the national agencies. Since there is a common pension system, personnel can move between levels of government without loss of retirement benefits.

One argument against the integrated personnel system, especially where the central government makes appointments, is that the

staff selected as they are by a body external to the local authority, may tend to be irresponsive to the local authorities. Another argument against the system is that, the requirement for appointments to be made at the centre may tend to result in excessive centralization and the consequential delays and lack of adaptation to local conditions.

The problems of delay, however, could be reduced through delegation of substantial authority to local authorities with regard to junior grade appointments. The problem of insensitivity to local authority interests could be to some extent resolved by involving the local authorities in the final selection of senior officials.⁷

Conclusion

As the foregoing review indicates, the use of decentralization in managing development, will not act as a panacea to the problem of effective organization for managing the problems likely to be faced by African states in the 1980s.

In this chapter we argued that decentralization is a concept of a developed economy with a strong nationally conscious central government anxious to hire off matters of local interest to capable and locally-elected citizens; that to advocate decentralization for emergent African countries would be to ignore the sum problems facing African countries governments, (i) of fostering national unity and rapid economic growth, neither of which can be solved easily in a decentralized structure; and (ii) that centralization will ensure easy mobilization and mobility of scarce resources in funds and trained manpower.

Against centralization it has been argued that politicians and civil servants who run central governments are increasingly out of touch with the wishes and aspirations of the people; that the party system and the use of party whips make governments ineffective in representing the wishes of the people. It is further argued that there is a growing desire for participation at all levels and that local government has an important role in fostering rapid economic growth; that it will decongest government at the centre and thereby free national leaders from onerous details as well as bringing management of public affairs closer to the site of operation, and thereby increase the

⁷ For an account of the approach to the problem by Ghana, see K. A. Owusu-Ansah, *Ghana's New Local Government System in the Context of Development Administration*, Vol. 2 No. 2 July-September, 1975.

people's understanding and support of social and economic development activities and thereby facilitate personal and group adjustments to needed changes.

The problem to be faced by African states is, therefore, the need to reconcile central government responsibility for policy direction and assessment of performance with the desirability of efficient popular participation, while at the same time ensuring that ways and means are found for fostering national unity which is of great importance to national integration and development. Therefore, African countries, will have to get onto the decentralization bandwagon with care, due to this fragility of their nationhoods. They should allow only as much decentralization as the fragile state of their national unity will allow.

The Role of Public Enterprise

A substantial part of the public sector activities is carried out by public enterprises, in many African countries referred to as "parastatal" institutions. The number of public enterprises in Africa, twenty years ago, when the majority of the countries in the continent gained independence, was very small. The British and the French had set up some such enterprises, but the pattern was by no means consistent. Thus, as Yash Ghai shows, while the British administered Ghana without the creation of any parastatal companies, in Kenya, they did start a sizeable number of such enterprises, particularly in response to the needs of the agricultural sector.¹

The agricultural sector in Kenya at the time was, of course, dominated by European settlers, whose economic activities required a diversified and reliable service. The marketing boards, the most typical example of such enterprises, were set up to facilitate both production and sales of these farms.

Public Enterprises in the African Economies

The growth of the parastatal sector in the post-independence period can be seen in very much the same light. As African governments have become more and more aware of their development responsibilities to fulfill their objectives. There seem to be two major sources of the expanded role of public enterprises in post-independent Africa. The most important is an increasing desire to control the economy. African governments, almost irrespective of ideological orientation, have "nationalized" foreign companies whose influence on the national economy has been considered

¹ For further reading see: Yash Ghai (ed.), *Law in the Political Economy of Public Enterprise: African Perspectives* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1977).

substantial and strategic. Most governments have also initiated new parastatal companies to stimulate local productive activities. The second cause of expansion in the parastatal sector is a conscious policy of creating independent organizations responsible for activities previously handled by the civil service. The assumption here is that a parastatal institution is less hampered by bureaucratic red-tape and thus more effective in serving the public.

The contribution by public enterprises to the gross domestic product (GDP) varies among countries, but is generally not dramatically high, mainly because the African economies are still dominated by small holder peasant agriculture. Take, for example, the case of Tanzania. Ten years ago the number of public enterprises did not exceed one hundred. In 1979 the figure had risen to 300.² According to the latest available statistics, however, the total output of the parastatal sector did not amount to 10 per cent of GDP in 1975. The figure has, according to unofficial information, gone up since then, but by no means in any dramatic fashion. What this suggests is that where the "modern" sector is still relatively small, the overall contribution by parastatal companies to the GDP, even where the economy is based on socialist principles, remains modest. In Nigeria, on the other hand, which does not aspire to build a socialist economy, the contribution by public enterprises to the national output is higher because there agriculture today contributes only 25 per cent to the GDP.³ Nigerian parastatal companies play an important role, usually in competition with foreign corporations, in such sectors as extraction of oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, construction and distribution.

The importance of parastatals is not only measured by their contribution to the national product. Their significance lies particularly in the fact that they are involved in those sectors of the economy that are most strategic from the point of view of increasing control over the economy. Thus parastatal companies are especially common in the financial sector, in key production areas but also in vital service fields. They also play a crucial role as domestic sources

² *The Public Service We Need to Meet the Challenges of the 1980s* paper submitted by the Tanzanian delegation to the Second Round-table Conference of AAPAM, Nairobi, 7-15 August, 1979, p. 7.

³ *The Public Service We Need to Meet the Challenges of the 1980s* paper submitted by the Nigerian delegation to the Second Round-table Conference of AAPAM, Nairobi, 7-15, August, 1979, p. 4.

of capital formation, in Tanzania, for instance, generating no less than half of the investment capital.

The picture of the parastatal sector varies from one country to another in Africa. It differs particularly in terms of its scope. Parastatal companies within one and the same country also tend to differ from each other. Thus, there is no reason to think of all these enterprises as homogeneous.

The commonest types of public enterprise in Africa are those established in the field of public utilities (e.g. power, transport and communication). Each country has its basic utilities under the direct management of a public enterprise of some sort. Though relatively few, public enterprises in the manufacturing field have, of late, become increasingly common especially in the socialist-oriented countries. They have generally come into being by the government setting up state-owned factories or entering into partnership with private persons. Political ideology has often markedly determined the method selected and the extent of government involvement.

Public enterprises in external trade typically take the shape of marketing boards for the overseas sale of a limited range of primary products (e.g. Produce Marketing Boards in Sierra Leone and the Gambia). In East Africa similar boards have been instrumental in promoting and regulating the sale of such produce as coffee, cashew nuts and tea. Marketing boards for local sale of produce have largely been less successful, although they have shown some promise in the Gambia and Ghana.

Public enterprises, as already suggested, have played an important role in promoting more indigenous control of the national economy. Although the demarcation of the economy between the public and private sectors and between aliens and citizens varies from country to country, the trend towards greater "indigenization" of the economy has been common throughout the continent. It has been a natural post-colonial reaction.

In the more socialist-oriented countries (e.g. Sudan and Tanzania), public enterprises cover every sector of the economy, with their dominance in the economy still growing by leaps and bounds. And the enormous expansion of the public sector in both countries has meant a radical change in the distribution of ownership in favour of localization. In Kenya, on the other hand, the government prefers the policy of increasing indigenous economic participation in existing enterprises. Parastatal companies are also used to encourage

African entrepreneurs to play a more active role in the national economy. There is ample evidence that Kenyans are participating actively in the economic expansion that is taking place in the country. However, progress in localization is modest presumably because of the government's cautiousness over alienating foreign investors.

In between these two extremes, stands Nigeria whose strategy for indigenization entails not only government acquisition of equity participation in a number of strategic industries and the widening and intensification of government participation in existing industrial enterprises through joint ventures and complete government ownership, but also the reservation of certain fields (requiring the utilization of simpler skills technology and relatively modest resources) to its own citizens. As a result, there has been an enormous expansion in the indigenous ownership of both the public and private sectors of the economy, thus making even more visible Nigeria's already intractable problem of acute manpower shortage.

Given that the African economies still remain dependent on capital, technology and even critical managerial skills from outside, it is clearly premature to claim that indigenous control is a reality. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the African governments in the first two decades of independence have made rapid inroads in the national economies. The public service is not only involved in the traditional role of providing basic utilities but in most countries also actively involved in promoting commerce and industry.

This rapid expansion, however, has been accompanied by serious management problems. Although such problems are also found in the private sector, they have been particularly serious and difficult to solve in the public sector. When AAPAM devoted its annual seminar in 1974 to the problems facing public enterprises many delegates were inclined to see these as "infant ladies".⁴ There is now a growing realization, however, that the problems are more fundamental. Certainly the management difficulties have shown little tendency towards decline.

So grave are these problems in some countries that a recent review committee in Kenya could but conclude that these shortcomings:

⁴ *Report of the Twelfth Inter-African Public Administration and Management Seminar held at Ibadan 3-8 December, 1973, (Lagos, Federal Ministry of Information, 1974).*

constitute a serious threat to the economy and it is, therefore, a matter of extreme urgency that steps should be taken to overcome them. The economic and social costs of delay in taking action to remedy these serious problems are simply unacceptable.⁵

In Kenyan situation is by no means unique and the above statement, therefore, gives a blunt indication why in the 1980s special attention must be devoted to performance improvement in the parastatal sector. Some countries might decide to tackle the issue by "denationalization", i.e. return some of the public enterprises to private hands. This, however, is not likely to be very common and that is why a discussion of the public enterprises merits a special chapter.

Factors Affecting Public Enterprise Performance

In terms of organisation the public enterprise differs from a departmental undertaking (i.e. a ministry) in at least two ways: one is that the organizational structure adopted does away with the day-to-day direction of the minister; the other is that a public enterprise is allowed to undertake its own policy-making within the broad boundaries prescribed by law but free from perpetual decision-making by legislative directives on policy. The late A.H. Hanson's definition of public enterprise captures its institutional peculiarity. The public enterprise, he says, is :

an institution operating services of an economic and social character on behalf of government but enjoying an independent legal entity; it is largely autonomous in its management though responsive to the public through government and subject to some direction by government; it is equipped, on the other hand, with independent and separate funds and the legal and attributes of commercial enterprise.⁶

The fact that public enterprises have been freed from some of the controls applicable to government departments does not mean that they are free from the basic rules of conduct which must be respected

⁵ *Review of Statutory Boards*, Republic of Kenya, (Nairobi, Government Printer, 1979), p. 22.

⁶ A.H. Hanson, *Public Enterprise and Economic Development* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 364.

by such departments. The relaxation of controls is meant mainly to give them scope to exercise the initiative and innovative flexibility normally associated with private enterprises. As we will see in the subsequent account, the discussion of the problems facing public enterprise management in Africa has entered on the question how far control over these enterprises should extend. Some have argued that public enterprises have faced difficulties because they have been insufficiently controlled. Others have argued that they do not enjoy enough operational autonomy. The problems, however, are not only related to control. Many stem from inadequate planning at the stage of establishing the public enterprise.

Establishment

Complaints often heard in connection with the creation of public enterprises in Africa include poor planning, lack of feasibility studies, uneconomic setting, use of unproven industrial processes, heavy dependence of imported raw materials, inadequate working capital, as well as inadequate or complete lack of market research. To prevent the creation of an unviable or unnecessary public enterprises therefore, it is perhaps necessary to draw attention to the need for a feasibility study to be made on the creation of each such enterprise before it is created. The report of the feasibility study should indicate what ministries want the public enterprise and why, *specify* the objectives to be pursued by the enterprise, the fields of activity in which it is to operate, as well as the criteria to be applied in evaluating its performance. Also relevant will be an analysis of the resources in the form of money, physical assets and manpower it is to have at its disposal and its role in the government's development policy. Moreover, there should be no doubt about its initial capital structure, the responsible minister and the composition of the board of directors. The Review Committee, in Kenya for instance, recommended that a parastatal company would not be allowed to create subsidiaries without prior consent by the Minister concerned.

In general, public utilities are expected at least to break even, while manufacturing and trading concerns are considered as actual or political sources of capital formation. But all too often these expectations are not met, primarily because the government insists on the enterprise charging prices hardly sufficient to cover their costs of production. Yet some degree of price control is inevitable in all African countries. For prices of the goods and services produced by

monopolies (e.g. public utilities) have to be controlled; likewise, goods in short supply will usually also attract price control if the price is not to be beyond the reach of the majority; industrial raw materials are therefore also likely to suffer the same fate. In the round-table discussions it was pointed out by some delegates that government pricing policy has been unrealistic and thus forced public enterprises to be begging from the exchequer. In addition, it may be politically necessary to spread distribution of goods or services to relatively undeveloped parts of the country whilst such a measure may eat considerably into the profits or capital formation of the public enterprise. These problems cannot be avoided. But to reduce grievances and in fairness to managers of public corporations must be publicly recognised. Managers in submitting their budgets and annual accounts to their ministers, may themselves do well to isolate subsidies or accounts for social services from the purely commercial operations, and to show unambiguously how the social obligations affect their final results.

Control by the Board of Directors

In most public enterprises, responsibility for top level policy-making is placed in the hands of a board of directors, which is appointed by the political authorities (that is, by the minister within whose portfolio the enterprise naturally falls functionally). Below this board, and responsible to it, is usually a management committee composed of the main departmental heads under the chairmanship of the managing director or the general manager which meets regularly to deal with operational plans and problems of the enterprise.

Although combination of chairmanship of a board with managing directorship is not very common in the countries studied, such a combination *could* make for decisive, dynamic leadership of the enterprises concerned. An effective chairman-cum-managing director is much better able to establish an effective two-way relationship with his responsible minister. Despite the dangers of individual empire building, it is much better to have one man who can put the enterprise's case comprehensively and professionally to the minister, than to have to wait until the board arrives at a decision on every significant issue the minister brings up. In addition, such an arrangement could reduce the conflicts that habitually plague the relationships between boards and managers in many countries. Of

course, if the chairman has been appointed on a purely political patronage basis, without regard to competence, then there is no alternative to keeping the two posts separate. Such a system of appointment is not uncommon and in Liberia, for instance, it has recently been identified by a presidential task force as a main weakness.⁷ The delegates at the round-table also deplored this practice.

The duties of the board of a public enterprise are, in general, similar to those undertaken by the board of a private joint stock company. The only notable exception is that many policy decisions which the board of a private enterprise would take automatically are either taken by the minister or referred to him for confirmation. In effect, the board of a public enterprise is concerned with middle-level policy, that is with policies between those of the minister and the managing director, for example making strategic appointments, budgetary control and public relations.

The success of the board would therefore be largely determined not by the qualifications and qualities of its members, and the time they have available for their duties but also by the degree of interest they show in the enterprise, as well as the extent to which they consider themselves responsible to the enterprise itself rather than to outside interests.

Management

Even with an effective board, the success of the enterprise depends on the system of management and the level of administrative capability. The important internal managerial problems include imprecise definition of operational objectives, non-involvement of staff in setting the objectives, inadequate delegation of authority and motivation, as well as ineffectiveness of control systems.

Some management consultants have recommended the use of the concept of "management by objectives" (MBO) as the basis for an appropriate method to tackle these problems.⁸ This leadership methodology entails the establishment of overall corporate

⁷ *The Public Service We Need to Meet the Challenges of the 1980s* paper submitted by the Liberian delegation to the second Round-table Conference of AAPAM, Nairobi 7-15 August, 1979, p. 6.

⁸ For an account of the precautions to be observed in introducing the methodology in African Civil Service, see K.A. Owusu-Ansah, "Management by Objectives in an African Civil Service Context", *Greenhill Journal of Administration* vol. 1, no. 4, January-March, 1975.

objectives, from corporate plans or philosophies and breaking these down into specific, measurable, time-bound goals for each organizational unit. With sustained effort and search it should be possible to secure quantifiable or at least reasonably precise goals for most positions in the organization. Next, each job-holder and his superior together establish the objective for the former, mutually agree on job improvement plans, and align and link the objectives with those above, below and across subordinates' position in the organization, the principle being that the deepest commitment for performance is achieved where staff have a part in setting their own objectives. The subordinate is then allowed freedom to choose his own methods for the accomplishment of his objectives on the understanding that he will be judged at the end of an agreed period by the results he achieves from time to time before the expiry of this period he is advised on his progress and given guidance where necessary in his work. To measure the extent to which the objectives have been accomplished, periodic discussions—usually at agreed intervals—take place between the subordinate and his "boss". Here the subordinate reports on progress he has made towards the achievement of his objectives. Reasons for failure, if any, are examined, improvements are suggested and specific objectives for the next period are jointly established.

For the MBO-based methodology to be successfully introduced, however, there is need for top management to be committed to it, for managers to be trained in the use of the system before its installation, and for participative styles of leadership to be adopted by the rank and file of management.

Another problem with the internal management of public enterprises arises from an inadequate organizational framework. Many industrial enterprises are too weak in terms of finance, personnel and other factors to be able to withstand *direct* competition from the private sector and the constricting effect of *direct* control by government ministries. To free such enterprises from debilitating effects and thus facilitate their survival and possible growth, a system of organization which since 1968 has shown signs of promise in Ghana is the "holding company".⁹ In this arrangement, a number of industrial enterprises are brought under the overall management and control

⁹ For a discussion of PIP, See *Improving Performance in Public Enterprise*, Report of the International Conference on Improving Performance in Public Enterprise in Eastern and Southern Africa, East African Management Institute, Arusha, 1975.

of parent body (that is, the holding corporation), with the latter body performing a variety of functions for the 'constituent companies'. These functions normally include the formulation of integrated policy **guidelines for the companies in regard to the transfer of technology**, training personnel administration, legal matters, formulation of a common position on procurement arrangements, marketing management, unified accounting and reporting system, and establishing a pool of technical facilities and financial planning. Under the scheme the weak companies are able to draw immensely on the resources, facilities and skills on the relatively successful ones without having to face stiff competition in the open market; also they are protected from the direct prodding of the central government which is, under the system, obliged to pass all its directions through the parent corporation. This way, a number of industrial enterprises which would otherwise have easily perished are nursed in relative security and peace to maturity and profitability. The ultimate aim of course is to decentralize authority to the constituent companies as and when they prove capable of coping with the rigours of external competition.

External Controls

As all public enterprises are public institutions, they are subject to the basic guidelines which regulate the activities of all such institutions. These include the rules of (i) *political supremacy* which requires that the legislature, under whose authority the public enterprise has been instituted, must provide directions (laws or other orders) which will govern every activity of the public enterprise; (ii) *public accountability*, which means that each enterprise can be called to render account in public for the manner in which it has executed the orders given to it by the political authority which created it; and (iii) *efficiency* which means that the public institution must reach its full objectives with the least expenditure.

To ensure that these guiding principles will prevail, a public enterprise should normally be subjected to external controls by the legislature, by the ministers and by external auditors.

Legislative control barely exists in most African countries because representative assemblies, where they still exist, are seldom capable of holding the executive accountable for its actions; also, in general, African legislatures lack the means for keeping themselves regularly and reliably informed about the affairs of public enterprises. To

remedy the situation, national legislative bodies should be provided with occasions for coherent discussion of the affairs of public enterprises as well as with the kind of information about public enterprises that will enable them to make useful contributions to the debate. For instance the occasion may be in the period when the enterprise formulates its long-term development plans and it seeks permission to raise more capital funds, either from the exchequer or from the public; or when it presents its annual report and accounts. For the opportunity to be seized on such occasions for a discussion of the problems and prospects of the enterprise (from the standpoint of principle policy of achievement), the legislature should first be equipped with the appropriate information on the subject. This information may best be acquired through investigations pursued systematically by members of the legislature themselves, preferably through a special committee of the legislature. Public Accounts Committee do not, however, often have enough time and expertise to deal with this sort of problem. It is advisable, therefore, to have a separate committee for the control of public enterprise.

Ministerial Control

The general pattern of ministerial responsibility for public enterprise in Africa is that which gives each enterprise to the minister within whose sphere of jurisdiction it naturally lies functionally. Indeed the only exception among the countries studied is Sierra Leone where the President has recently assumed this responsibility himself.

The powers of the responsible political office-holder over the public enterprise are usually defined by the founding statute, either precisely or loosely. These executive powers usually consist of the power of appointment of board members and other key staff of the enterprise; the power to dismiss board members and the key staff; as well as the power to issue directives (i.e. orders issued on the minister's own initiative) and approvals (i.e. sanctioning a course of action proposed or effected by the management of the enterprise itself) on the running of the enterprise.

In making the appointments to the boards, the appointing authority may have a completely free hand or be constrained in law by a requirement to observe standards specified for the appointment of the members. In many cases, however, the appointing authorities have not, by and large, been inhibited by the law in the

pursuit of their particular interests. The prescription of qualifications in particular has not in practice deterred many ministers in Africa from making appointments on the basis of political patronage or partisan favour, rather than on the basis of ability to do the job. What is gradually becoming a slightly less ineffective limitation on the minister's freedom of selection, however, is the proviso nowadays that certain "interests" should be represented on the board.

Moreover, as already alluded to, it is common to find in statutes creating public enterprises, provisions which vest in the responsible minister the power to order or sanction certain actions by the enterprise on policy matters. This is by far the most significant aspect of the relationship between the minister and the public enterprise. For the terms of this power and the administrative conventions which develop around it, in large part determine whether, and to what extent, the theoretical division of the responsibility between matters of general policy and matters of day-to-day administration can be maintained.

Nevertheless, definitions of the minister's powers are not futile. They perform at least two functions. They indicate the areas of policy where ministerial intervention may be most usefully exercised, for example, in changes in enterprise's objectives, capital structure, method of appointment of directors and key officials, general plans for research, training and labour welfare, as well as in cases of monopolies or enterprises producing commodities in short supply—in the pricing of goods and services. Although it is impossible to prevent ministerial intervention from going beyond such matters, where "public interest" is clearly involved, it is possible to emphasize them with all the authority that the law commends. Moreover the definitions reduce the evils of excessive ministerial interference by limiting the number of decisions for which ministerial "approval" may be obtained before action is taken.

In the exercise of these supervisory powers, the minister needs advice. The major source of this advice will inevitably be the senior civil servants in the ministry. Where senior civil servants are also appointed to the boards of the public enterprise, this can give rise to considerable confusion in the line of command which often helps to convert the enterprise into another public service department, thus depriving it of its structural advantages over the latter type of arrangement. More usual, however, is the difficulty which arises because a civil servant in the ministry has assumed the power to give

orders to the enterprise on the minister's behalf. In such instances, not only is the chain of command from the minister to the manager unnecessarily lengthened and confused but also the civil servant finds himself giving advice to the enterprise in an area in which he may be least qualified.

It is perhaps worth stressing that public enterprises, through their boards of directors, come directly under the control of the responsible minister, not under the ministry. The manager should, therefore, have direct access to the minister although it usually facilitates matters for such contacts to be made through the permanent secretary to the minister. Apart from those appointed to membership of the boards, civil servants are not in the line of command and are therefore not authorised to give orders or even "advice" to the enterprise, except on the direct orders of the minister himself. In the last resort, however, it is the sort of conventions that are developed between the minister and the enterprise more than the enforcement of legal rules that determine the success or otherwise of the relationship.

Financial Audit

Another form of external control of public enterprises is the external audit. However, this type of audit—called commercial audit—goes beyond the traditional "receipts and disbursements" audit associated with the auditing of government accounts, in that it ensures not only that the financial statements present a true reflection of the results of the enterprises operations but also that the enterprise is using up-to-date and efficient systems of financial control.

Only a few of the African countries have established special bodies charged with commercial auditing of their public enterprises. Tanzania, for instance, has a special audit corporation for the parastatal sector alone. This situation is often explained by shortage of manpower in the required skills. The more usual strategy for African countries is either to employ the services of private firms of commercial auditors for the purpose or to add this task to that of the auditor-general. In all cases, however, the auditing activity does not normally include the investigation of managerial performance, and therefore, excludes suggestions for improvement of managerial efficiency.

Efficiency Audit

The examination of managerial performance with a view to suggesting improvements—efficiency audit—in the public enterprises is seldom done on any regular basis in Africa, where permanent units to keep efficiency of public enterprises under review are a rare phenomenon. Even where such permanent structures have been established, there is yet to be an indication of their impact on the enterprises. Ghana and Kenya, for instance, have the State Enterprises Commission and the Inspectorate on Statutory Boards respectively, which are charged with the setting of realistic and explicit objectives (or rather productive targets) for the public enterprises in co-operation with the management of the enterprises, with regular checking on the enterprises' results and systems of operation, as well as with following up with remedial action. Yet from all indications, these structures are hamstrung by lack of appropriate professional manpower. With more competent and experienced staff, these inspectorate bodies could serve a useful role in project evaluation, assessing manpower requirements and spotting management weaknesses.

Most African countries rely more on the appointment of committees of inquiry to perform the function, as and when there is a public outcry about the performance or behaviour of an enterprise. To reduce the possibility of this function being ignored or not given enough attention in the future, recourse may be made to regular use of firms of consultants made up of both foreign and indigenous experts for the provision of consultancy services.

Conclusion

Governmental involvement in the economies of African countries is rapidly increasing, especially in the industrial and financial fields. With this phenomenal expansion of the share of government in the economy have come the increased importance of public enterprises as a pattern of organising government business, and therefore, the need to refashion this mode of organization to adequately meet present and future challenges.

Yet these public enterprises are already bedevilled by problems of their improper creation in some instances, problems of excessive ministerial control, problems of inadequate internal management and problems of insufficient external auditing and legislative controls. To improve matters, suggestions have been made regard-

ing the need for feasibility studies and an explicit statement of objectives for the enterprises, ways of optimising the composition and effect of boards, the necessity for conventions to evolve to regulate the relations between the minister and the enterprise, the leadership methodologies for improving internal management, and strategies for subjecting the public enterprises more to the dictates of public accountability and efficiency. But even though they are pretty comprehensive, these suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive.

Manning the Public Service

The organizational restructuring of the public service which we have proposed in the preceding chapters would have little impact on the performance of the services if the level of performance of the personnel manning them does not have a corresponding improvement. In other words, the productivity of the personnel manning the services is a very important variable in the overall performance of the public service. In this chapter, therefore, we shall review the extent of preparedness of the public service personnel systems to contribute to the fulfilment of the development objectives and tasks of the 1980s and where we find the level of preparedness to be wanting, an attempt to propose requisite improvements will be made.

When discussing attributes of a public service that is desirable to meet the challenges of the 1980s, the following should be said about public service personnel systems. The personnel system of the 1980s ought to be efficient, competent, adequate, motivated, dedicated, innovative, honest and not very expensive to maintain, in view of the scarcity of resources. To what extent can the African public services' personnel system be said to possess these attributes.

The African Public Service Personnel Systems: Characteristic Features

In discussing the characteristics of the African public service personnel system we shall focus upon those characteristics that are common to many of the countries, and are critical to, or have a bearing on, the performance of the services.

First, we shall discuss, the principles which guide the organisation and management of the services and review the extent to which these principles either constrain or enhance the performance of the service. The major guiding principles in the organisation and

management of the service in many English-speaking African countries, especially in the country we surveyed, are close to those that are currently in force in Great Britain, mainly because they were inherited from the colonial period. One of the principles is the career service, first developed in Britain and France, but having been tried earlier in China. In Britain and France it arose out of the need for a public service system which would have a high degree of efficiency or productivity. In order to achieve this, it was deemed necessary to establish a career service which would offer a dignified and respected career on a full-time basis and would attract and retain persons of superior capacity in the service of their country. When colonies were established, the same principle was used in the colonial service, for which the constituting individual colonies derived their men. The principle of full-time, lifetime career was also to be used in the recruitment of the supporting local staff.

Independence has, in many of the countries being reviewed, not changed the position. Both the principle and the practice of staffing the services is still under the career service principle. There are, however, a few reservations concerning the relevance of the principle in present day conditions. It is argued that the emphasis on permanence and tenure for public servants arose out of the need to maintain stability, order and continuity and was also a function of the scarcity of eligible entrants into the service. The present state of the world, Africa included, and the character of the problems facing African countries, is what is best described as "turbulent", demanding a high degree of flexibility on the part of the managers of the situation. The employment of public servants on a permanent basis, therefore, deprives the government of the flexibility which it needs for meeting changing situations, through its personnel administration. In a period where government functions are expanding so fast, in number, scope and complexity, it might become necessary to shift the human resources from tasks which are felt to be no longer necessary to new tasks.

A related aspect, is the organization of the service into hard and fast classes, which in turn was intended to make the career principle operational. As in Britain, before Fulton, many African countries have their services divided into several lateral and vertical classes, including the professional classes, the administrative class, the executive class, and the common cadre. The movement between classes tends to be very restricted; recruitment is at the bottom of the

class, with any vacancies occurring at the upper levels being filled by upward movement. The objective of organising the services along these lines is like the objective for adopting the career service, to attract and retain the best, as well as create commitment to the unit, but it tends to deny the government necessary flexibility in its efforts to manage turbulent environments.

Another important principle, employed by the African governments in their organization and management of the personnel function, is the *merit principle*. It, too, is an important ingredient of the British (indeed, also the French) public service system. In the case of Britain, the principles are incorporated within the legal structure of the government as a basis for personnel selection, promotion and career management and is a concomitant part of the career service. The principle is composed of four elements: competence, equality of opportunity, open competition for appointment by examination and political neutrality. Competence and open competition ensure that the quality of the civil servants remains high. Equality of opportunity is part of the democratic ideal. Political neutrality is thought to be necessary under a system of political democracy where there are more than one party. It guarantees both expert, objective and impartial advice in policy-making and loyal and faithful execution of policies.

Although no African government has come out and rejected the principle of merit—indeed as we shall note later, all the governments support the principle publicly but the practice of many of them is indicative of their unhappiness with it. They ignore it many a time. Many of the governments accept the aspect of competence and equality of opportunity. They may be willing to go along with open competition, through examination, but few, if any, will accept the aspect of political neutrality. The feeling on the part of many governments is that no government employee can be neutral with regard to the tasks at hand—all ought to be committed to the basic party goals and sensitive to the political process. This feeling was particularly intense at the time of independence, when the nationalist politicians, who had just assumed national political offices, used to equate the insistence on political neutrality by civil servants to siding with the departing colonialists. Since then, many of the countries, have either become one party States, or military regimes and in their case, the feeling is that it is ridiculous to argue for neutrality when there is only one alternative presented by the single party. The situation

now, therefore, is as follows. Among the countries surveyed, only four—Nigeria, Ghana, the Gambia and Swaziland—are still adhering to the principle of political neutrality in principle, but in practice they increasingly expect the senior civil servants to at least toe the party line. The others, do in fact expect the civil/public servants, especially those occupying senior positions to not only toe the party line, but to be active party members. This situation, has in many of the countries, tended to affect the performance of the service in various ways.¹

Partly as a consequence of the commitment by the government to the above principles, or in some cases, to the departure from the principles, and also as a result of other factors, including the relative underdeveloped character of the African countries and the colonial legacy, African public service personnel systems have a number of characteristic features, which we shall review below.

Low Degree of Competence

This feature has its origins in the colonial legacy, in that the colonial administration was satisfied to use officers recruited from the motherland for the management and supervisory functions, using local personnel only for the semiskilled and unskilled activities. For that reason little or no emphasis was placed either on provision of educational facilities for the purpose of preparing a pool, out of which recruitment would be made, and/or training facilities for purposes of increasing the competence of recruited personnel. The whole of East Africa, for example, had only one university; Central and Southern Africa relied only on the University of Rhodesia. Even Nigeria and Ghana, which were much better off in this area, were not adequately provided for with respect to the education and training of professional personnel. They were heavily dependent upon the colonial civil service.

For this reason, therefore, when independence came almost all the African countries, found themselves totally unprepared in the manpower area. They had either to continue using the colonial servants to perform the management/supervisory functions of government or to make do with the not too well trained, inexperienced local manpower resources that were available. They chose to do both. The administrative class positions, especially, were

¹ This question is discussed at length in the chapter which follows.

immediately filled with local personnel. Some of these were well educated but had been denied the opportunity to gain the necessary experience. Many of them, however, though not well-educated, had been in the service for a long time performing supervisory responsibilities. They could with crash training easily perform the management tasks. Professional positions, however, continued to be occupied by officers either loaned by the former colonial service recruited through technical assistance.

Since then, however, the majority of the countries have taken serious steps to correct the situation. The bigger ones have established universities of their own, which are turning out educators, engineers, surveyors, doctors and administrators. They have also set up training facilities for improving the competence of staff already in posts. Where facilities are not available trainees are being placed in overseas institutions. These efforts, however, have not been able to seriously improve the position, mainly because of two factors.

The first is that the expansion in facilities has occurred at a time when the scope of public involvement in societal activities has been growing tremendously and the size of the economy has, of course, been growing fast, to the extent that the supply has on no occasion matched demand. The other factor is that, in many of the countries, the growth in educational and training facilities has not been a systematic exercise, linked to projections in manpower requirements and the anticipated changes and growth in the economy. Tanzania has been the most systematic in its manpower planning, but even Tanzania has seriously neglected the supervisory levels, to the extent that there are now great distortions in the country's high and middle level manpower supply, which is too top-heavy.² Zambia, Kenya, the Sudan and Nigeria have also taken some steps and the success they are having is commendable, although the impact of their efforts seems to be still heavily constrained by the absence of an authoritative decisional nerve-centre, at which demand for manpower would be linked to supply. This aspect will be discussed in depth later on in this chapter.

Size

Another important aspect which does affect the productivity of the services is the rapid expansion of their staff. Swaziland, one of the

² The United Republic of Tanzania, *Report to the President of National Manpower Situation*, Government Printer, Dar-es-Salaam, 1977.

smallest among the countries we are focussing on, for example, has since 1968, when she gained independence, experienced a doubling of government personnel, from 4,900 employees in 1968 to 9,105 in 1975. Tanzania's public service (the civil service) has increased from 35,000 in 1961 to well over 100,000 in 1976. Other countries could report similar expansions. The noted expansion is, in part, a consequence of the increase in government activity in both number and scope. All governments now provide the services they were providing when they gained independence to more people, they also provide a wider range of services. In addition, and maybe as a consequence, they have to extract more resources and they have to regulate more activity than they did at the time of independence. They definitely had to take on more personnel to be able to cope with this expansion in activity.

However, the expansion in part is also a consequence of pressures on the government to provide employment to "the boys". In all the countries visited, expansion of the service due to this factor was said to be a regular feature, to the extent that, in some of these countries even many people presently in government employment are occupying posts which are not even established. But even when you have few or no employees occupying unestablished posts, that is no sense indicative of that country's ability to control the personnel complement, as there are very few countries, if any, where a proper job analysis has been done to establish the exact personnel requirement. The problem seems to be under active scrutiny in many of the countries, notably the Sudan, Swaziland and Tanzania. Tanzania has indeed acted, though haphazardly, to deal at least with the symptoms. In 1976 it carried out a retrenchment exercise involving the reduction of the number of public employees by 20%. Swaziland has been considering doing the same, but the government has not found enough will to undertake the exercise.

This expansion, has had several adverse consequences on the overall performance of the service. First, as we noted earlier, the system has little management capacity and is already difficult to manage the services, even without the expansion. The expansion in the size of the services, further overloads the capacities of the systems, thereby the controlling and supervisory function is improperly performed. With reduced supervision and controls, discipline, on the part of the operators, might decline. As a consequence, productivity declines. Secondly, since the additional

employees, have in part been hired without any substantial workload, the tendency has been for them to remain relatively unoccupied or to share workloads with existing personnel. But since the additional employees have to be paid salaries at existing rates, this has meant an increase in the cost of the services without a commensurate increase in the amount of work performed, with adverse consequences on the productivity of the services.

Morale and Motivation

Morale is yet another aspect which is said to be presently low and is adversely affecting the productivity of the services. This factor, perhaps, more than others, deserves being given a lot of attention by policy-makers if African countries have to cope with the problems of the 1980s. Not that it is necessarily the most critical, but it is a factor whose resolution is within the competence of policy-makers in most African States, yet it is very neglected in most of the countries. In country after country which we visited, the majority of the people we interviewed cited low morale as the explanation for the noted decline in productivity. In one country, for example, a driver who was assigned to us was late to pick us up several times and when we reported the matter to his supervisor, the matter was simply brushed aside and ascribed to the low morale in the service. The country, where productivity of the services seemed to be least affected by a decline in morale, at least to the observer as we were, is Kenya and it might be interesting to note the reasons when we mention them later.

The reasons for this state of affairs were varied and included the constant interference in the services by politicians, especially with respect to such issues as recruitment, promotion and discipline, the increasing abandonment of merit in recruitment and advancement, conditions of service that compare unfavourably either with the private sector or with the parastatals; conditions of service (salaries and other benefits) which are ever being adversely affected by the vagaries of ever rising inflation. Political interference when it takes place tends to increasingly demoralise the senior civil servant, he no longer feels competent to take decisions on issues without such decisions being reversed; his subordinates tend to increasingly regard him as a "toothless bull dog" whose authority is meaningless, thus undercutting the basis for maintaining discipline and control in an organization. In such circumstances, the civil servants abdicate their "authority".

One aspect of this factor which seemed to attract most attention in our discussions, was the question of pay and conditions of service in the public service. It is also the subject upon which governments have devoted considerable time and efforts—in all the countries studied, the subject of pay and conditions of service has been studied at least once by commissions of inquiry since the attainment of independence. It is also the most intractable and seems to affect morale most. The issue seemed to be conceived differently among the various countries studied. In Kenya, for example, the problem was conceived as consisting of how to attract and retain well-qualified and experienced personnel in the public service, in view of the fact that the private sector pays so much more. In Tanzania where there is little private sector to speak of, the problem was one of what salary and other benefits would make the public servant (both senior and junior) put in an honest day's work and resist from being corrupted by the public. In Zambia it was more a problem of life and death—what salary and other benefits will be able to meet the vagaries of spiraling inflation. Nigeria has only recently completed a salary review and awarded large increases, yet even there, the question of declining morale due to this factor loomed high amongst the items discussed. It, therefore, deserves to be discussed at length, especially concerning ways and means of dealing with the respective consequential problems—this we do in the next section.

Towards an Enlightened Approach to Personnel Management

The foregoing survey was intended to give a bird's eye view of the major problems afflicting the African public service personnel system. In this section we shall discuss the extent to which enlightened personnel policies may resolve some of these problems and lead to improved productivity of the services. We shall treat the subject under the following sub-headings: the importance of personnel policy; organization for management of the personnel function; approaches to staffing; the role of manpower development; compensation and its relationship to motivation; performance appraisal; and staff relations.

The Importance of a Personnel Policy Statement

It is fashionable for governments to issue policy statements on what the objectives of development ought to be, and as they do so, they also mention the importance which they attach to the various resources required for the development process. Those, policy state-

ments on land, finances, capital abound in the Five Year Plans of the respective African countries. Little mention, however, is made of one of the most important resources—people. The public services of the African countries are composed principally of people or personnel, but little is said concerning how that important resource may be obtained, harnessed and deployed for purposes of accelerating socio-economic development. In our interviews in the countries we visited we were at pains to discover whether there was a comprehensive government statement which one could construe as the policy of government on public service personnel—to our disappointment there was no such statement. One had, therefore, to distill the policy of the government on personnel from circulars on various subjects of the personnel function. Even when it was said earlier that most governments are committed to the organisation of the services through the use of the career service, the statement did not have any authoritative base. It was more of an assumption than anything else.

Governments will have to deal with this issue seriously to convincingly indicate the importance they attach to human resources as an aspect of the development process. Preferably, such a comprehensive statement ought to be issued by the highest office, either the office of the President or Prime Minister to give it the necessary weight. The statement ought to be subject to periodic revision to take into account changes in circumstances. Its circulation ought to be wide, preferably, displayed on notice boards so that all staff may have access to it. The statement would include a statement of principles on each of the personnel management functions, including recruitment, training and development, conditions and terms of service, promotion and advancement, and staff review. It is in this statement where the role of central organization for managing the personnel function would also be stated.

Central Organization for Managing the Personnel Function

Next in importance to clarity of governmental objectives in public personnel management is the need for properly constituted organizational mechanisms through which the function of managing personnel would be carried out. Such organizational mechanisms ought to be given requisite prominence, status and power facilities. Some aspects of this point, especially those dealing with leadership

of the service, have been discussed elsewhere in the study.³

The situation obtaining in the majority of the countries is far from this ideal. Taking the countries surveyed, for example, the central organization for the management of the personnel function consists of: (i) the Establishment Secretariat or Directorate of Personnel Management, (ii) the Civil or Public Service Commission; (iii) Departmental Establishment Offices; (iv) the Office of the President or Prime Minister. Power, authority and responsibility in respect of various aspects of the personnel function is shared amongst these units.

This arrangement whereby responsibility and authority for the personnel management function is shared among agencies has been criticized in some circles and in our field research, a number of people made submissions supporting the integration of the various agencies. We were told of the many occasions where conflict of jurisdictions between the public/civil service commission, the directorates of personnel management and departments occurred. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the public service commission, as they are structured and staffed in many countries tend to be unresponsive to government's staffing needs. The majority of the commissioners are not professional personnel experts, yet they are required to decide on such matters as recruitment, appointments, promotions and disciplinary actions, which require a professional hand; and, as a consequence of passing these responsibilities to the commissions, these vital management functions are divorced from the line managers of government. At best this arrangement is viewed to be cumbersome causing delay and frustration in vital personnel decisions. At worst, it is a breach of basic management principles, in that the staffing of key government units is denied to the people who are charged with the management of the units.⁴

Against this argument is the fact that the commissions work independently, thus helping to ensure that personnel decisions are made objectively, on merit alone and, because it works as a team, it is able to avoid inclinations towards victimization on prejudice, which individual managers might find difficult to avoid.

One approach to the resolution of the problem involves the merging of the Public Service Commissions with the establishment

³ See the chapter on machinery for manning government activities at the centre.

⁴ See Republic of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry* (The Ndegwa Commission) 1971 for a succinct argument on these lines, p. 71.

division/directorate of personnel management. The director of Personnel should in turn delegate to the maximum extent possible, these responsibilities to the permanent/principal secretaries. Thus, the full spectrum of the personnel management function from recruitment to retirement would be centered in the establishment division/directorate of personnel management. Government would then have a true central personnel agency, both responsible and accountable to the senior management of government for proper and adequate staffing. Following this proposal, the Public Service Commission would be replaced by an agency appointed by the President and responsible for hearing appeals by aggrieved employees or applicants, who feel they have been treated unfairly by government. These appeals would cover all aspects of personnel management, as they affect individuals. Such a board would be empowered to hear evidence and call for relevant information. It would recommend action to the head of civil service based on findings. The institution of such a body could allay fears that might arise from consolidating the entire personnel management function with the establishment secretariats/directorates of personnel management.

The approach to the problem outlined above, though sound, might be considered too revolutionary and therefore unacceptable. What might be acceptable is the retention of the present executive role of the public/civil service commission, but with increased delegations of authority to permanent secretaries for appointments, promotions and disciplinary action in respect to certain job group categories up to a certain level. It might also be possible to use more vigorously the department and ministry heads in roles of advisors to the commission, especially concerning matters affecting their units.

Regarding the directorates of personnel management/establishment secretariat we have the following, concerning how best to locate them in the overall government machinery and an internal organisational structure for purposes of ensuring that they are authoritative. As said earlier, establishment secretariats, at the time of independence, were in most of the countries, small units located in either the prime minister's office or the treasury. Often, as in Kenya and Tanzania, (Tanganyika then) the central personnel functions were performed by two separate units, one located in the treasury and another in the office of the prime minister. In many countries, a consolidation of the functions into one unit, invariably

called directorate of personnel/establishment ministry or public service ministry has taken place, although in some countries residual functions are still performed by the treasury. Locating the establishment secretariats in the office of the prime minister/president is intended to bestow upon the personnel agencies, the authority and power of the biggest and most powerful office in the land, and thus increase its latitude vis-a-vis line ministries. The experiences of countries, where this is the practice, as evidence from Zambia and Swaziland indicate, is that this location has tended to act as a drag rather than an advantage, in that they are considered to be of smaller status than a ministry. The head of the civil service, who could provide protection happens to be very busy in his other roles as permanent secretary to head of government and secretary to the cabinet. The result is that the directorates end up without effective strength to make things move their way.

An alternative to locating the central personnel agency in the office of the head of government, is the creation of full-fledged ministries of Personnel management under the overall leadership of a cabinet minister and permanent secretary. The advantage of this approach is that the problem of being regarded as an agency which is inferior in rank to other ministries would no longer exist it would then be in position to stand and defend itself directly in all forums, no longer under the tutelage of some "big brothers".

The extent to which the central personnel agency is effective, however, may not depend so much on location, and nomenclature. It is a function of the orientation which the agency has concerning the personnel function. The conception of what personnel management in government entails will, in turn, condition the internal organizational structuring. If the conception of the personnel management task is that it involves concentrating on the administration of rules, regulations and procedures, then a static organization will emerge. The achievement of the bold objectives set by government requires an orientation which views the personnel management function as requiring action, boldness, initiative and development. As the Udoji Commission noted, it is important, that the approach to the structuring of the ministry responsible for personnel management is cognizant of this fact.⁵ The Udoji Com-

⁵ *Federal Republic of Nigeria, Public Service Review Commission*, (Hereinafter called the Udoji Commission), p. 21.

mission suggested the creation of several divisions around four major dynamic functions, and, although the Commission had the Nigeria situation in mind when making its recommendations, the approach could profitably be employed by other African countries in the organization of their central personnel agencies. The key tasks for such an organization would have to include: the continuing review of the tasks of government with a view to determining manpower requirements in quantity and quality and to assess recruitment and training needs; the establishment of personnel policies and practices and to monitor their application throughout the service in areas such as recruitment, training, promotion, evaluation, delegation, and pay, assisting of ministries in developing the type of organization that would enable them to perform their tasks more efficiently, and the study of modern management techniques with a view to determining their adaptation to the situation obtaining in the country concerned. Once the importance of these functions is realized, a viable organizational structure can be worked out.

Approaches to Staffing

In the survey of personnel problems being experienced by African countries, we noted that one of the factors contributing to the incompetence of the services was the approach to staffing which is out of date. Broadly speaking, staffing should involve a number of activities including: (i) the determination of manpower needs and requirements which is achieved through job analysis and manpower planning; (ii) the search for, and decisions on sources of recruitment and (iii) selection and placement of the right candidates. The first and second activities tend to be merged. An organization that is following an enlightened policy to staffing would want to approach it, by following the activities through, not necessarily in sequence, but many a time concurrently. Let us devote a little time to review the experience of African countries and suggest measures for ameliorating the situation.

The Determination of Manpower Needs

The process of determining manpower needs has two major dimensions. On the one hand, it involves evaluating the total amount of work to be done by the organization, and then establishing the work to be done in each job in the organization, including establishing the relative importance of jobs, called Job Evaluation;

establishing the relatedness of jobs—job grouping; and determining the overall job needs in the organization.

The situation obtaining in many of the countries is that the public service jobs were established piecemeal in response to either crises or in some cases as a consequence of "Parkinson's law". Of all the countries studied, only the Sudan has made an attempt to carry out a comprehensive job analysis in the entire public service, and even there, the exercise is still incomplete. In some cases, some of the jobs may have been established for purposes of fulfilling a real need, but following the establishment of posts, little attempt is made to review the consequence of these new jobs to the existing ones.

Many countries, however, seem to have the right setting for take off along the desired direction. Thus, in Kenya, Tanzania, and Swaziland to mention a few, the current organizational set-up for central Personnel Management have job analysis and related functions prominently catered for. The next step, however, should be to move from intentions to actions. Action would require that job analysis and related activities be, not simply assigned to some unit in the personnel office but that the units charged with performing the functions be adequately and competently manned, which, due to the general short-supply of trained manpower in all the countries, is not the case presently. Since the objectives of government are changing, becoming more complex all the time, the analysis of the structure of governmental activity, and the competent parts, which are the jobs, ought to be equally continuous.

The other dimension of this activity is the determination of current staffing position in relation to the jobs being done and likely to be done in future, with a view to identifying short-falls. This activity is called manpower planning. Effectiveness in performing this activity of determining current needs and forecasting future needs, depends upon three basic inputs; information on organizational plans and the consequential job requirements, which is dependent on how well the job analysis functions are performed; knowledge of present manpower resources, and information on the manpower environment, which would tend to influence future supply.

Just as we said for job analysis, the position in many African States, the respect to manpower planning is very unsatisfactory. Among the countries of our study focus, for example, two of them, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, have not even organised themselves for the

performance of the function. The others have at least set up organisational frameworks for performing the activity, although the measure of success differs considerably. For some, notably Zambia, Nigeria and Swaziland, their human resources planning efforts are characterized by their *ad hoc* and piecemeal nature and general lack of perspective. They tend to be responses to crises rather than carefully integrated planned strategies.⁶

Some of the countries, however, notably Kenya and Tanzania, are approaching the manpower planning activity with increasing precision. Kenya, for example, has in the development plan which has just been completed, 1973-78, detailed specification of personnel requirements on the basis of development targets to be achieved and a clear differentiation is made between the existing personnel, the required personnel, the actual number of persons to be trained and an indication of sectors with a likely surplus and those with a deficit. Actual implementation of these specifications, however, has been hampered by the fact that implementation of the manpower targets, was never made the responsibility of any one specific agency. As a consequence, there were many efforts, which were uncoordinated resulting in the dispersal of energies and wastage of resources. The United Republic of Tanzania has approached the manpower planning function with equal if not greater seriousness. Starting from a poor manpower supply base, it decided to take a pragmatic and utilitarian approach to educational and human resource planning. The major objective of Tanzania's approach was to satisfy the economy's demand for high-level human resources by 1980s while, in the meantime guarding against excess supply, which is socially undesirable both in respect to employment considerations and the opportunity cost of the scarce resources available to satisfy the many other urgent demands.

To make the manpower planning function effective, therefore, a number of measures ought to be taken by the respective governments, including the following: The need to integrate manpower planning into the overall national socio-economic planning, involving as we said, in the case of Kenya, detailed specification of personnel requirements on the basis of development targets to be achieved; a clear differentiation of the existing personnel, the

⁶ For a review of the deficiencies of the manpower planning operation in Nigeria see, Udoji Commission, *op. cit.* p. 14-15.

required personnel, the actual number of persons to be trained. The designation of a competent and authoritative agency to be responsible for the integration and co-ordination of the efforts of the various units involved in data collection and implementation. This might, in many countries, involve moving the manpower planning function from the Ministry of Economic Planning to the Central Personnel Agency; strengthening the manpower capability in the respective line agencies—ministries by appointing officers whose job will be to continually review organizational manpower needs; instituting machinery for facilitating dialogue between all the agencies involved, especially between the users and the suppliers.

Policy on Recruitment

Many of the African countries have no explicit policy on recruitment, but, by and large, the unstated policies are influenced by the extent of commitment by the government to the twin principles of or indeed all English-speaking African countries, have their public services organized along the lines of closed career services, which, in turn, are divided into a number of horizontally and often fragmented "services". The services invariably include general administration, judicial administration, and the foreign service. Those services are in turn divided vertically into classes of employees, sometimes on two or three levels.

Under the arrangements of the closed career service, a civil servant tends to be recruited at an early age into the service with an implied promise of a life career during which he works his way up the hierarchy of the service. This promise of career means that, unless the candidate is not confirmed, he is assured of a life long employment which can be terminated only by mental or physical incapacity or the committing of a criminal offence. The structure is closed because it has no adequate provision for the admission of outsiders (who might be well qualified and experienced) into the higher grades of the hierarchy. Such a career and closed system does not provide enough incentives for change, modernization or the achievement of excellence and can lead to a type of inbreeding and obsolescence, which affects not simply structure, but organization and management. This situation is hardly satisfactory and such a service cannot react speedily to the turbulent demands which are bound to be placed on it in the 1980s. The public service structure must, therefore, be change-oriented.

A number of countries with such closed career system have made adaptation with a view to achieving a certain amount of flexibility in the use of the scarce personnel available to the nation. The adoption of a common grading structure has been done, in some countries, so as to facilitate lateral movement between services and cadres. This falls short of adopting an open career system, but it at least places all jobs of substantially equal difficulty and complexity in the same grade and therefore on the same grade and therefore on the same scale, thus offering opportunities for easier vertical and lateral mobility within the service.

It may be possible to go a stage further by replacing the closed career system with open systems, with lateral entry possibilities at all levels. Although no country (among those studied) has adopted the system, many of them have filled posts at various levels of the service, including the post of permanent secretary, with people from the private sector, or the universities, and the practice is becoming acceptable. The major constraint in regularizing the practice is the disparity in terms and conditions of service between, especially business organizations on the one hand, and government on the other, which makes it difficult for government to attract well-qualified and experienced personnel from the business world. It may, however, be possible to think of ways and means of resolving the problem, including the devotion of a special fund for topping up the salaries of people recruited along these lines, where it is thought to be necessary. The price might be worth it if it leads to the infusion of valuable new blood into the services.

The extent of commitment by governments to the principle of merit has tended to affect recruitment policy in the following manner. Publicly, all African governments support the need to adhere to merit in recruitment for the public service. But much as they may support the merit principle, governments often find that they have other important goals to achieve which may be hindered by too much adherence to merit. Thus, in the early years of independence in Africa, over-adherence to merit would have entailed the retention of the colonial civil servants and thus thwarted the fulfilment of the Africanization objective. In ethnically heterogeneous countries for example, it may be necessary to adopt a policy in recruitment which is either intended to correct earlier imbalances in government employment opportunities or to achieve the hegemony of a particular tribe. In one party States, persons are not

considered qualified for government service if they do not adhere to the ideology of the ruling party. Many a time these considerations are valid and we do not suggest that African governments should disregard them. Our submission, however, is that whilst cognizant of these constraints to their full adherence to the merit principle in recruitment, efforts should be made to obtain the best people within the narrow limits available.

Selection

One other activity of the staffing function which has not received due attention and has in turn affected the quality of the public service is the selection of staff. Concerning this aspect, the Udoji report had the following to say about the position in Nigeria:

... present method of recruitment reveals that it is perfunctory. Vacancies are normally not advertised and the commission relies on unsolicited applications. The Commission puts out advertisements only when it is requested to do by the ministries. The advertisements are dull and are not capable of attracting the most promising men and women to apply. They do not contain enough information about career prospects. On the basis of unsolicited applications and occasional advertisements, the Commission invites candidates for interview, 12 at a time, and spends between 15 and 30 minutes with each candidate. The interview consists of questions on the candidates' records of educational qualifications and work experience. These are interspersed with a few questions on current and international affairs. There is no determined attempt at discovering traits, interests and abilities ...⁷

The foregoing description of the recruitment process in Nigeria easily fits the situation obtaining in any of the countries being reviewed. As a consequence, the selection process, never really helps to get the best available for the organization.

In many countries, the rationality of the selection process is, however, hampered by other non-logistical factors, some of which we mentioned earlier in our discussion on recruitment policy. A recurring factor is the interference and interventions by political

⁷ Udoji Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

authorities and politicians with the work of the selection agencies, whether these be the commissions or the line authorities. It is not unusual for a minister to direct that a particular candidate fill a particular post, in spite of the fact that the selecting authorities would have chosen some other person, based on the rational established process, limited though it may be. The consequences of such intervention is to make a situation which is already bad, much worse.

The rationality of the selection process may be improved by making the logistics of the selection process to be more methodical than is currently the case. It may involve the adoption of the selection methods being used by private business. These methods include: occasional sampling of the labour market; keeping rosters of potential candidates, carrying out preliminary interviews; the use of tests to supplement interviews, and the use of specialists, such as psychologists, as advisers in the selection process. This might elongate the selection process, and might involve increased expense, but the additional expense may in the long run become offset by the improvement of personnel quality.

Rectification of the problems arising out of unprogrammed interventions by politicians may include: the strengthening of the powers and authority of selection agencies, through the appointment of respected and authoritative individuals to such bodies. The protection of such agencies by important power centres in the country such as Office of the President; but mainly, by impressing upon the perpetrators of the intervention, the irregularity and consequences of their actions on the overall performance of the services.

Education and Training

An important method of enhancing the capability of public administration is to increase the availability of qualified persons, in order that recruitment may benefit, and improving the capabilities of civil servants who are already in post. The availability of qualified personnel for the most part depends on education. The quantity and quality of education, would, in most cases, largely determine the kind of persons available for recruitment into the public service. As we have indicated earlier, the number of educated persons (especially college graduates) in Africa is small, and qualified people in the technical and scientific areas are even more scarce. A major reason for this is the paucity of facilities and, of course, resources. A long-term approach to the issue is through the improvement in the

educational system and expansion of appropriate facilities.

The past decade has seen Africa make great strides in this area and although the results have not been able to satisfy the great demand for qualified personnel, which is overgrowing, the efforts are laudable. In 1961, for example, English-speaking Africa had less than six universities and many of them were concentrating on the liberal arts, law and the social sciences. Today, countries such as Nigeria, have more than six universities and a whole range of disciplines from computer science to hydrology are being offered. In 1961, only one of the countries had an administrative staff college, today all of them either have at least one or are in the process of setting one up. This is no mean achievement given the paucity of resources which we have been noting all along.

The question to ask, however, is whether this emphasis on the expansion of educational facilities and, consequently, on increased enrolment was intended to meet the real manpower needs of these countries? The reply is that often it has not since it was never quite related to the manpower planning activity which was discussed earlier, mainly because many countries did not have manpower plans anyway. Because of this disjointedness in needs and facilities, therefore, in many countries for example, there is an oversupply of arts and law graduates—Ghana and Kenya—whilst in the same countries there are critical shortages in the technical and scientific fields. In Tanzania, the country has been doing very well with regard to satisfying the professional and management levels, but, as it has recently been realised, the first line supervisor level (the technicians) in factories and industries has been badly neglected.⁸

There is a need, therefore, to approach the question of education from the perspective of "education for what?" Given the paucity of resources, facilities cannot mushroom without being related to the achievement of societal objectives. It is important that the provision of additional and even existing educational facilities is related to the country's manpower plan which would in turn be premised on the country's development priorities. This might require a certain degree of high handedness on the part of the government unit responsible for manpower planning as it attempts to influence universities, private organizations, and ministries to keep in line.

⁸ Tanzania Investment Bank, *Study on Performance and Productivity in Tanzania*, mimeo, 1978, p. 41.

The frustrations on the part of the agencies being co-ordinated might be eased by the establishment of a consultative machinery, through which the views of the parties concerned might be aired. An example of such a body is the National Manpower Board, which the Udoji Commission recommended to have established in Nigeria.⁹

Whatever the quality of the employees recruited happens to be, there is a need to improve the capability of public servants through training once they are in post. This need is especially important in African countries where the educational facilities available are limited and often do not produce the persons needed by the government. This is especially true, as we have noted, of certain basic skills and specialised fields, such as public health, tax collection, and the postal services. Even in the fields in which the educational system provides enough persons, it may be necessary to supplement the education of the new recruits by a certain amount of training.

Current position on training in Africa is unsatisfactory, and a lot will have to be done before it can have a positive impact on performance. The amount of training being conducted and therefore the number of public servants going through training programmes is so scanty; it is often unsystematic; the little training being carried out is often not directed towards the achievement of specific objectives; the training efforts are unco-ordinated. Thus, in Nigeria, the Udoji Commission notes that in spite of a strong awareness by the Nigerian Government of the need for increased efforts in training reflected in the doubling of facilities with consequential doubling in enrolment at various training institutions, only one in 20 staff members in the administrative categories were receiving any kind of training. This ratio fell to only one in 50 in the intermediate administrative and junior staff members.¹⁰ In Swaziland, the need to improve training as a tool in public service performance improvement has been a subject of over three reports, the latest being the Wamalwa Report. In almost all cases, the report's recommendations have for one reason or the other not been implemented, in spite of the fact that Cabinet took the necessary action at its level after most of these reports were submitted. Little positive action seems to have resulted. Thus in the first five years of independence, only a total of 556 persons attended

⁹ Udoji Commission, p. 19.

¹⁰ Federal Republic of Nigeria, Udoji Commission, p. 20.

refresher or induction courses in the entire public service.¹¹ Factors accounting for this state of affairs in Swaziland included, the lack of commitment to training by senior echelons of the service, inadequacy of training facilities; and the poor quality of new facilities available.

Perhaps, Kenya is the country which, since the recent reorganization of the Directorate of Personnel Management in 1978 is approaching training systematically and with vigour. When we were at the Directorate and the Kenya Institute of Administration during our field mission, we were told of plans for expansion of training facilities, a five year plan on performance improvement training; the imposition of a training levy, all intended to boost the status of training in the country. But even there, the road is still long.

African countries will have to take a number of measures to make training an effective tool in public service performance. The major ones are the following:

First, they will have to emphasize to line managers, that responsibility for the development of their staff lies with them and not either with the training institutions, nor the agency co-ordinating training activities. A demarcation of responsibilities between the ministries and parastatals; the training institutions and the directorates of Personnel will have to be worked out. Whatever arrangements are worked out, the position of the Directorate of Personnel as the co-ordinator of the national training effort ought to be emphasized, if the mushrooming of unco-ordinated training facilities and programmes and therefore the dissipation of scarce resources are to be avoided.

Secondly, they will have to approach staff training systematically and relate it to organizational and staff performance. This has a double edge. On the one hand, the training institutions must be clear about the objectives of the courses intended to be mounted. This is also the only way to subsequently gauge results. On the other hand, the line agencies (departments) must be clear as to the benefits which they expect officers to derive from attending certain training programmes. Performance evaluation of staff will have to be introduced in order that performance gaps may be identified. It is these performance gaps which training will have to correct.

¹¹ Kingdom of Swaziland, Report of the Commission of Enquiry (Wamalwa Commission), 1975/76, Government Printer 1976, pp. 39-40.

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Thirdly, training facilities which are well staffed will have to be made available. Here paucity of resources will act as a constraint. One way of surmounting this problem is to have several countries pool resources for purposes of developing joint training institutions. A number of efforts in this direction are already under way—in management development for example, there are institutions such as CAFRAD, and the proposed sub-regional graduate schools. Such efforts will have to be intensified in the future.

Motivation

While education and training, together with intelligence and inborn capacity, influence the ability of individuals to perform, an individual public employee will be able to contribute his very best only if he is highly motivated. In the survey of the state of the public services in Africa, we noted that public employees were currently demotivated and that morale was generally low. A number of factors influence the level of morale and motivation in any organization, including the state of vertical and horizontal communications; and leadership patterns, but the most critical one is the system of material incentive which is in force. Our discussions on this subject, therefore, will focus on how the systems of material incentives may be made to facilitate improved performance of the service.

Among the variables which affect performance of the public personnel systems in Africa, the question of material incentives has been subjected to the most frequent examination. There is no country for example, which has not had a salary review commission since all the African countries attained independence. Indeed some countries like Swaziland, Zambia, Kenya, have had more than one. Even when commissions are appointed to review the entire operations of government machinery, one aspect which receives greatest attention is the issue of compensation. In spite of this concern and devotion of effort to the problem, it remains the most intractable and in our field interviews emerged as the issue which generated the highest emotions.

Discussions concerning improvements in systems of compensation in African public services have revolved around the following aspects. First, is the question of the form which compensation should take in government service. What is the desirable balance between the use of pay (salaries or wages); fringe benefits; other conditions of service—such as hours of work etc.; security and

tenure constituents of the compensation package? On what element should public services place emphasis in order to attract and retain personnel and to have maximum performance by employees? The second aspect concerns pay or salary policy. In a way, this would involve a rediscussion of the first aspect, but it does involve other issues also. Put in the form of a question, discussions on this issue revolve around the question of "what factors ought to be taken into account when deciding on the public service wage/salary structure?"

Forms of Compensation in African Public Services

In the industrialized capitalist world compensation packages both in private and public service are often composed of the following elements: Salaries or wages; direct supplements to regular pay; programmes that provide assistance to employees in meeting day-to-day employment problems; and programmes designed to provide security or protection against major hazards, including unemployment, ill health and dependent old age.¹²

African public services compensation systems include almost all these elements, although there is a preponderance in favour of salaries and wages and the programmes designed to provide security or protection against major hazards. The tenor of discussions, however, does not so much revolve around the question of the relative prominence of the elements in the compensation package. Rather it tends to concern the relative inadequacy of the entire compensation package from the point of view of being able to attract and retain qualified personnel. Since these two issues are to be treated under other subject headings later in the study, we have little reason to discuss the matter further at this point.

Evolution of Policy on Compensation: Important Considerations

Government, like all employers, should not approach decisions on compensation policy haphazardly if they are serious about the improvement of performance of the service. They need to take into account certain factors, for them to take decisions with a view to facilitating the emergence of certain attributes in the service.

Ideally public personnel compensation policies ought to be directed at attaining a number of objectives. The first category of

¹² Dale Yoder, *Personnel Principles and Policies: Modern Manpower Management*, Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood, 1961, p. 514.

objectives relates to the need to ensure that compensation paid to government employees represents a fair reward for the services they render to the nation. This would require compensation packages in the public service to be relatively comparable to compensation packages in non-public service employment. The second category of objectives refers to the need to relate compensation policy to employment market forces. This means that in those countries, where there is an abundance of labour at the lower level of skills, the market price of labour at these levels is likely to be low, and might even be lower than what is considered to be a decent wage for supporting a desirable standard of living. The same forces would tend to push up the compensation packages for the scarce, qualified manpower to levels which might make the gap between their compensation packages and that of the low grade workers very large.

Certain constraints, however, make the adoption of these policy directions difficult, if not impossible, not only in Africa but the world over. The first constraint which militates against pegging public service compensation packages on obtaining levels in the private sector is the total inability by the public service to shoulder such a burden. Governments can do so only at the expense of the various development objectives. There are just not enough financial resources to meet the resultant increased cost. Secondly, letting market forces determine compensation packages might not be socially and politically tenable, since this would tend to increase the gap between high income earners and low income groups in many of the countries, other than those where unskilled and semi-skilled labour is in short supply, which is not the case in any of the African countries. Any additions to the blatant gap in incomes existing in all the countries would just unleash undesirable socio-political forces which would tend to destabilize even further, the already fragile regimes. As a consequence, many African governments have tended to adopt compensation policies which are very much against market forces and thus not able to attract and retain the best in the service and those who are in the service tend not to give their best contribution. This situation has in turn negatively affected the efficiency of the service. The problem in many African countries, therefore, is how to resolve this dilemma.

It may, nonetheless, still be possible to work out a compensation system and package which could attract and retain good candidates for the public service and motivate them to contribute their best

without having either to abandon other important development programmes and/or to abandon its commitment to equity. It was in fact suggested that in some countries, the present compensation systems are already to some extent catering for this objective¹³ and could with minor adjustment, adequately deal with the problem. The present compensation packages in many of the countries, though low (for senior personnel) in respect to the element of salary, is quite attractive when one takes into account the fringe benefits. In many countries, public servants occupy subsidized housing and rentals in no case exceed 15 per cent of an employee's pay. Leave terms tend to be more generous in the public service than in the private sector. Moreover, the security provided by the public service cannot be compared to the instability of employment in the private sector, which is ever dependent on the continued viability of the enterprise. In the public service, moreover, provision for dealing with uncertainties is much more regularized and adequate. The non-contributory pension schemes, a feature in all the countries studied does not have its comparison in the private sector. Finally, especially for the very senior personnel, is the element of power, authority and status. The chief executive of Nigeria shell, may get five times the salary earned by the Permanent Secretary in the Treasury but the latter has enormous power and status—that is not quantifiable and is not translatable into monetary terms, and many public servants would not abandon that power for money. It may with minor cost of living additions, therefore, be possible to attract and retain the good and brilliant into the service.

An aspect of personnel policy which has not received adequate attention is grading and salary structure. There is, in many countries, no formulae for equating pay levels in the different services, the civil services, the universities, the judiciary, the police service, and the public enterprises. Even within the civil services, the differentials in pay amongst positions do not depend on a rational criteria.

In Tanzania, some efforts have been put into the standardization of pay scales, between and among the various services. The exercises, however, was not approached systematically, and, as a consequence, fresh problems have arisen, involving complaints that the gradings are too rigid and tend to compare unlike institutions

¹³ Interviews with many senior government officials in Kenya supported that statement.

and unlike jobs.¹⁴ In many of the countries, the present system of grading is based on the traditional British Civil Service concept of classes, administrative, professional, and clerical in which evaluation criteria, focus primarily upon the educational attainment of the individual rather than on the specific work content of the post. Within the broad classes, the structure is cut up into some hundreds of cadres which in many cases tend to be arbitrary in relationship. Nigeria, for example, had in 1974, 600 cadres.¹⁵ A small country, like Swaziland, had in 1976, over 115 different cadres and pay scales.¹⁶

The rationalization and simplification of pay and grading structures ought to be high on the agenda of the African public service if many of the other proposals are to have the desired impact. To achieve this, governments may have to undertake a number of concomitant activities, including establishment of broad uniformity in the grading and pay of all the public services, in order to ensure that every sector is able to recruit and retain its fair share of scarce manpower and to eliminate invidious comparisons between sectors; develop job descriptions which are as close to being descriptive of the work assigned to the employee and the knowledge and skills required to perform the work; establish a system of grading whereby groups of jobs are ranked on the basis of relative difficulty and responsibility of the work from the simplest to the most complex and responsible; attach a salary range to each of the grade levels from the lowest to the highest.

A number of countries have already taken steps to establish a unified grading structure and therefore unified pay structures. Nigeria has done so for the entire public service, including the parastatals and the universities. Kenya, Tanzania, and Swaziland have done so with respect to the civil services. But the approaches to uniform grading in all the countries has been marked up their failure to carry out the concomitant activities. In many cases, they established pay scales, related these to the existing posts in the public/civil

¹⁴ The exercise was initially approached haphazardly and had its major objective the equalization of pay in the government and the parastatals and not the development of a rational unified grade structure. So the cart was put before the horse.

¹⁵ Udoji Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

¹⁶ Wamalwa Commission of Inquiry, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

service, and the activities of job description. Job classification has either followed or has not been undertaken. In other words they put the cart before the horse.

Performance Appraisal

Another important personnel function which has tended to receive inadequate attention is review of the performance of the individual staff members. Only until recently many of the countries approached this activity through the system called the "Annual Confidential Report". Essentially the confidential reporting system involved a supervisor making an opinionated judgement on the performance of a staff member. The employee affected would not even get the benefit of feedback as to how he had been reported on. Consequently the reporting was irrelevant to the whole question of improving the performance of the individual staff.

A number of countries have now adopted the open reporting system on employees. Nigeria adopted it as a result of the implementation of the Udoji Commission recommendations; Ghana just before the Okoh Commission and Tanzania and Kenya have adopted it since 1975. However, we cannot say that this appraisal system has become institutionalized in any of the countries. A number of factors account for its non-institutionalization.

Firstly, performance appraisal is a technical activity and requires to be administered by persons who are trained in its techniques and methods. In many of the countries the adoption of the scheme was not preceded by requisite training for the administrators of the scheme—as a consequence they usually grope in the dark. Secondly, this system of staff reporting requires that the supervisor is honest and straightforward and tells the staff the truth. Many supervisors find it difficult to be blunt and they do not want to spoil established relationships—they therefore tend to be light hearted and middle of the road when they report on staff. Finally, the system requires a lot of time to be devoted to the exercise, involving joint meetings between the staff and the supervisors. The majority of supervisors have felt that they do not have the time. In order for performance appraisal to be effective and useful to staff and organizational development, it ought to be approached systematically, the supervisors and employees ought to be trained in its techniques; the organizational climate must allow for frank exchanges.

Industrial Relations

In any human organization it is reasonable to assume that conflicts and friction will arise from time to time. It is, therefore, with this realization in mind that workable organizations are designed with inbuilt machinery for resolving the problems arising from the interaction of people. A grievance is anything concerned with pay, working condition or personal relationship that irritates an employee or employees and causes him to be unhappy and frustrated in his work situation. Some of these grievances come to the attention of management and, if machinery exists, efforts are made to resolve them. For a variety of reasons, others never surface, they are suffered quietly by employees. It is this category that can affect morale and productivity of an organization quite badly.

In theory, there does exist machinery for resolving grievances within the public services of many of the countries. In Nigeria, for example, there is the Whitley Commission or the public service Negotiating Council whose functions are to facilitate staff consultation and negotiation. In all the countries, General Orders/Service Regulations provide for procedures to be followed by civil servants in seeking redress when they have been aggrieved. In Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya and Swaziland to mention just a few, the law provides for the existence of trade unions/staff associations, which are to protect and enhance the rights of public servants. All the countries, have within the Establishment Secretariats/Directorates of Personnel Management, units which deal with staff and industrial relations matters. From the foregoing, therefore, it looks as if all the governments realize the importance of industrial relations in public personnel management. However, implementation has been almost universally inadequate.

Several reasons account for this inadequate development of industrial relations machinery and grievance handling procedures in African public services. First with regard to the industrial relations machinery, both the government and employees are to blame; they have not been energetic and committed enough. This is partly explained, by the shortage of personnel on either the official side or the staff, trained or experienced in the principles and practices of organized employee management relations. In Nigeria, for example, the staff relations section of the Federal Ministry of Establishment in 1974 comprised only four people headed by a

Principal Assistant Secretary.¹⁷ In Swaziland, the unit is staffed by two junior administrative officers.¹⁸ Even Kenya, which has just reviewed the structure and staffing of the entire Directorate of Personnel Management, has only two senior personnel officers dealing with this aspect.¹⁹ Similarly, where unions and staff associations are in existence, the majority of the leadership of such organizations tend to be amateurs in the areas of industrial relations, and bargaining, an example of the paucity of training facilities and opportunities.

The governments, however, have been lukewarm in many of the countries, to the development of viable and energetic trade unionism. They tended to regard the trade unions as potential threats to stability. Where trade unions have been allowed to exist and thrive, they have been brought under the umbrella of the governing party, as in Tanzania or have been circumscribed in respect to what they can do or cannot do. If trade unionism in general is seen to be a potential threat to stability, the idea of trade unionism for public servants is shuddered at even more so. Until quite recently public servants were excluded from the International Labour Organization Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention of 1949. Trade union and staff associations, therefore, have in many of the countries remained very undeveloped or are toothless bull-dogs.

Where trade unionism for public servants has been allowed to thrive, such as in Nigeria, the tendency has not been the emergence of consolidated, strong unions, which can effectively negotiate with the government, but a proliferation of staff associations and unions, divided along cadre and class lines. The result, as the Udoji Commission noted, is "that no matter how well educated and trained the staff relations officers are, and no matter how well intentioned management is, they cannot be sure who represents who, and in fact are often confronted with seriously overlapping jurisdictions and inter-union conflict."²⁰

The question of paucity of trained personnel in the industrial

¹⁷ Udoji Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁸ Kingdom of Swaziland—Report of the Commission of Inquiry, Wamalwa, p. 36.

¹⁹ Republic of Kenya, *Organizations and Functions of Directorate of Personnel Management, Office of the President*, April, 1978 p. 7.

²⁰ Udoji Commission, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

relations field can only be solved by government intervention. It ought to promote training in the area, through the sponsoring of candidates to take courses abroad, through subventions to be given to universities and management institutes for purposes of organizing short courses and seminars. This is an area where intergovernmental approaches may become necessary.

The problem of government attitude to trade unionism can only be solved by government itself. Government ought to realize that prevention is better than cure. It should take initiatives and promote the emergence of responsible trade unionism. And, if it is felt that requirements for maintaining national unity dictate against the emergence of interest group type of unions, they should, to begin with, at least facilitate the emergence of government affiliated unions.

The fragmentation problem may be solved, as it had been in Kenya, by taking action leading to the formation of a single trade union which groups government workers of all cadres and classes. Both the Secretary-General of the now defunct Kenya Civil Servants Union as well as the Director of Personnel Management felt that the arrangement was already proving very beneficial to the industrial negotiating exercises since now all civil servants speak with one voice. The only possible hitch under this arrangement are problems posed by the union membership of Senior Civil Servants (such as Permanent Secretaries), who are also expected to play the role of the employer. It might tend to cause role conflict for them, but evidence gathered during the field work was that it had not yet posed immense problems as yet.

Regarding the aspect of grievance handling procedure, the problems consist of not so much the non-existence of such machinery, for in many countries, such machinery exists, but by in the refusal by mainly senior civil servants to first publicize the existence of such machinery throughout the public service and to allow the machinery to work. In Swaziland for example, middle level and junior civil servants complained that the procedure which provides for the aggrieved party to appeal ultimately to the Prime Minister, gets frustrated by the refusal of Permanent Secretaries, to submit such appeals to that level. When this is known to be pervasive, employees abandon the machinery and "suffer without bitterness". To rectify the situation it might be necessary to first simplify the procedures for handling employee grievances by

decentralizing the point of decision to as close to the workplace as possible, so that subsequent levels are involved only in appellate decisions. Secondly, such machinery and procedures ought to be publicised as widely as possible within the service, even if such publicization results in inviting grievances.²¹

Conclusion

In the foregoing, we have stated the attributes which African public personnel systems will have to develop to meet the challenges of the 1980s, reviewed the extent to which their present state can be said to approximate the desired position pointing out the shortfalls; and finally indicated the major changes or reforms which have to be undertaken to make them development and crisis management-oriented.

Regarding the attributes of a development oriented public service personnel system, we have emphasized the importance of a well-developed, well-staffed flexible structure at the centre which has to be armed with a lot of authority, power and facilities. Since the majority of the countries are not blessed with a structure with such attributes the task will be to work for its evolving. We have also emphasized that a correct approach to development of such a personnel system requires the evolving and the implementation of dynamic personnel policies, covering such areas as staffing, recruitment, training, evaluation of performance, compensation, motivation and industrial relations. Since the approaches of many African States to personnel policies are still very primitive and unoriented to development, a lot of work will also have to be done in that area.

²¹ Republic of Kenya, *op. cit.* The Commission thought that the increase in reported grievances which might result from the formalization of the procedure and its publicization might have positive results for the service and should be welcome. see p. 79.

Promoting A More Responsible Administrative Conduct¹

By virtue of their roles as advisers on, as well as interpreters and executors of government policy, civil servants—especially those in the top echelons—wield enormous power over the populace. To ensure responsible administrative conduct and thus help shape the civil service to popular liking, it is necessary that measures are taken to prevent the abuse of this immense administrative power. In other words, to contain administrative power, there should be commensurate administrative responsibility.

Administrative responsibility may be defined as the duty of feeling of obligation on the part of the bureaucracy to behave in a manner acceptable to other bodies or persons in the society. From this definition, it follows that these bodies or persons in society have power *over* the bureaucracy; that is, they have the ability to secure the dominance of their values or goals. This power is achievable through the exercise of formal authority, informal authority or both. In this analysis, we reserve the term “control” for power achieved mainly through formal means and “influence” for that secured informally.

The objective of the analysis is to examine problems being experienced in African countries in their attempt to achieve responsible administrative conduct and to suggest ways of raising the standards in a general way. The overall thrust will be to show that the present external pressures on the bureaucracy in African countries do not constitute an effective force and that the internal structures and values stand a chance of making an impact on administrative

¹ The account in this chapter draws heavily on K.A. Owusu-Ansah, “Administrative Responsibility and the Ghana Public Services”, *Greenhill Journal of Administration*, Vol. 1 No. 2, July-September, 1974, pp. 60-81.

conduct only if the political leadership aids them.

The method adopted is to describe briefly the different inter-related sources of power that are brought to bear on the bureaucracy in the normal course of administration both from within and from without and to evaluate the problems associated with each major source. For convenience, these sources are grouped under the following two headings: structures within which bureaucrats and other policy actors interact; and the value framework within which administrative decisions are made. The structures that exercise power over the bureaucracy may be either external or internal to the bureaucracy.

Power of External Structures

A major instrument of public accountability that is missing in the political scene of African countries under military rule is the authority of a deliberative representative body or legislature, distinct from the government, to empower or advise, limit, investigate and censure the Executive Branch. In the other countries in Africa where they exist independently of the Executive, legislatures have, with only a few exceptions, rarely posed a formidable obstacle to the exercise of authority or its control of the public policy-making process.

The courts are another source of external control of the bureaucracy. They are required to provide remedies when the normal processes of administration are not enough, when controversies arise that are beyond the legal capabilities of administrators to settle or when administrators invade the legal rights of citizens. This power of the courts is normally held in reserve in democratic countries and is invoked only when an administrator either usurps authority or thwarts justice. In Africa, this power is unfortunately seldom sought or used. Nor has there generally been a strong tradition of judicial independence capable of disallowing or voiding the acts and decisions of the Executive.

The Auditor-General and the Public Accounts Committee are also there to ensure the national legislature satisfies itself that public funds have been properly spent according to law and that there has been no extravagance or dishonesty on the part of those entrusted with the custody and disposal of these funds. Their effectiveness as the watchdog of the national exchequer is largely determined by their own performance as well as by the extent to which the warning and advice given by them are heeded. Can we in all honesty say that,

with the series of public scandals and inquiries that have almost formed inseparable parts of the lifestyles of African governments, the outputs from these external control agencies are ordinarily given the attention and obedience they deserve?

Another external agency that is required to exert control over the civil servant is the ombudsman organization or system. Thus, Nigeria and Tanzania have their National or Public Complaints Bureaux and Ghana is on the verge of replacing its Complaints and Investigations Division of the Office of the Head of Government with a full-fledged Ombudsman system, structurally independent of the Government. The Office of the Ombudsman is one way of ensuring the professional impersonal performance of duty by the civil service and at the same time ensuring humanitarian treatment for the citizen. The Office comprises a government official or group of officials who are given the responsibility and authority to carry out impartial inquiries into citizens' complaints that they have been badly or unjustly treated by the civil service. The Ombudsman can ensure that the civil service is run according to the impersonal principles of bureaucracies but that, at the same time, citizens can appeal to a higher authority when they feel that their own particular needs have not been dealt with adequately.

What probably needs emphasizing is that the Ombudsman system can be an effective watchdog of people's only when it is seen to be structurally detached from the machinery of government, when it is able to publicise its findings, and when effective action is taken on its reports. Publicity remains a vital part of democratic government, and the Ombudsman would contribute to it. Then any feeling of powerlessness that the ordinary individual may have towards the administration of government business might be eased by the opportunity to challenge the official machine. But as the Ombudsman concept is relatively new in Africa it might be premature to attempt to appraise its chances of constituting an effective power over the bureaucracy.

In general, then, we cannot escape the conclusion that the *controls* exercised by bodies outside the bureaucracy in Africa are, by and large, incapable of bringing the weight of their authority to bear on the bureaucracy. But, as indicated earlier external power is not limited to external controls; it embraces also the external *influence* exerted by individuals and groups in society. For the degree of honesty, alertness and responsiveness of a bureaucracy is, in the final

analysis, determined very largely by the degree to which members of the public take an interest and participate in the operations of the government. The methods commonly used in African countries—as indeed in most other countries—to secure this form of citizen participation include the formulation and articulation of interest groups, political parties and the mass media as well as government appointment of citizens to boards of Corporations, Commissions and Committees.

Interest groups are associations which try to influence government policy without actually seeking a share of power. Typically, the following interest groups exist in African countries: trade unions, employers' association, professional associations and farmers' associations. Their power stems from their capacity to resort to methods outside the constitutional channels of decision-making. Thus, for example, the trade unions have the sanction of the strike (even when this weapon is legally banned); the business groups can refuse to co-operate with the government; and the professional groups, too, can "withdraw their services". Yet the African experience indicates that with the exception of the trade unions, and to a small extent the professional associations in a few countries, interest group activities are generally inchoate and therefore not yet visibly able to constitute a powerful force for ensuring responsible administrative behaviour. Undoubtedly the trade unions in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and the Sudan have a loud voice in the shaping of labour legislation, wage policy and other programmes of interest to them but, perhaps with the exception of Nigeria, and to some extent Ghana, the overall effect of trade union influence on administration has been to lower productivity and standards of discipline. Professional groups have, on the other hand, had a salutary effect generally on the administration in some countries as Nigeria and Ghana where they are most alert and militantly active. Through exposure of their members to avowed standards of their own, the associations seek to reinforce the beneficial social influences in the background of members and to curb, restrain or reduce any proclivity to mediocrity and unsavoury conduct.

Whilst interest groups seek to attain their ends by merely influencing those who do wield power, political parties (where they are not outlawed) seek to govern in order to achieve their goals. In multi-party systems of government, the political parties seem not to exert any *direct* influence on the central bureaucracies beyond the

government party ensuring that its election manifesto and programmes are put into effect and the opposition group bringing the mistakes of the government into the open, as well as taking steps no mould their own programme for the future. However, only a few countries in Africa have this system, the preference in the majority of African countries being for single-party governments on the grounds that competitive political parties are inherently divisive. Under the single-party system, the political party may either assume a commanding role in public policy-making as in the Sudan (Sudan Socialist Union) and Tanzania (Chama Cha Mapinduzi) or adopt a lower profile relative to the bureaucracy as in Kenya (Kenya African National Union).

Two important adverse effects flow from dominance by the party: one is that since party officials decide policies without first obtaining detailed knowledge of possible consequences of their decisions while civil servants are restricted to the implementation of policies conjured up by their political masters, the policies are likely to falter at the implementation stage unless exceptional understanding is accumulated during that stage; the other is that there is often a tendency for the party branches to interfere in the administration of the civil service at the cost of morale and discipline in the organization. The low-profile party is also not without problems. It has the difficulty of not helping to make the bureaucracy more responsive to the people and therefore a tendency to promote apathy in the populace.

Another structure which has a potential for influencing the bureaucracy is the "mass media". The mass media have a duty to inform, to educate and to entertain. To discharge this triple obligation competently, their outputs ought to be accurate, objective, balanced and fair. Do the mass media in Africa by and large measure up to this standard? Television and radio are almost invariably under the thumb of the government, even though in some countries, notably Nigeria, a considerable amount of freedom is allowed the public on these media to challenge the government on national policy issues. Typically, too, many of the major newspapers are owned by the government and even the private newspapers are at times, through an annual re-licensing system and other subtle devices, manipulated either to fold up or to toe the government line; and in all cases, their circulations are naturally small since most of the people are illiterate. To make it possible for the mass media to

contribute meaningfully towards shaping the bureaucracy to popular liking, the governments should take on the role of a "residual legatee", assuming only such responsibility in this regard as is not adequately borne by the mass media themselves or by the public. The educated members of the public are obliged to be alert, ready to make their views known and contribute actively towards the encouragement of responsible mass communication through discernible support for and promotion of educational programmes. It is against such a background that producers of the mass media can hope to make any real headway towards professional competence if they make it their duty to turn out the highest quality product they are capable of.

Civic attitude then forms the foundation upon which citizen participation rests. It is only when the prevailing attitude of office-holders is one of selflessness, honesty and public spiritedness that something meaningful and enduring can be achieved by way of promoting responsible administrative conduct. Citizen participation in the bureaucracy usually takes the form of government appointments to public boards, commissions and committees. The effectiveness of such a device for exercising influence depends not only upon the willingness of qualified citizens to fill these positions but also upon the ability of the "chosen few" to contribute in the way of social outlook and a fresh point of view.

Power of Internal Structures

The discussions so far have covered the capabilities of external structures to control and influence public administration. But useful as the external structures are, they are incomplete without administrative self-regulation; that is, the controls and influences exerted from *within* the bureaucracy.

Internal controls in a ministry in an African setting are typified by problems of the extent of involvement of the minister in the day-to-day administration, the politicization of the bureaucracy, and the manner of supervision and control exercisable by the administrative superiors.

Governments naturally have a stake in the internal administration of the civil service for a number of reasons. Firstly, the civil service is *increasing* in size and complexity at least partly as a result of the expansion in the public sector of the economy. Secondly, governments have an economic, social and political responsibility for the

size of their workforce, its distribution, its competitive position in the labour market and variations in occupational groups. Thirdly, the government as the employer of a large labour force has to define its general policies with regard to the actual conditions of employment in the public sector. Finally, as to financial administration, it is the government, not the civil servant, who is ultimately accountable to the public for the manner in which funds are spent.

Given that the government must intervene in public administration, the question arises as to the areas and extent of its involvement. As the representative of the government in the ministry, the minister has very real power, however much it may be held in reserve, to intervene in any administrative matter since he is, by convention, accountable to the public for all facets of his ministry's operations. However, as he is not usually, either by experience or inclination a professional administrator, the actual control of the operations of the government machinery is left to the permanent secretary. Moreover, given the size and the complexity of present-day operations, the minister cannot become personally involved in administrative detail, even if he wished to, without neglecting his essentially political function of policy determination.

But not getting involved in administrative detail does not mean the minister must wash his hands off all administrative issues in the ministry. Indeed minister/permanent secretary relations have often become poisoned because of the feeling—often genuine—among ministers that they are deprived of all involvement in the administration of the ministries. To make for smooth relations, it is clearly necessary for the minister to be given at least prior notification and briefed about all major changes in personnel and structure in the ministry. We also wish to suggest that to accord with the demands of his political mandate, the minister should participate actively in budget formulation and be given the power to demand accountability from the permanent secretary on financial administration of the ministry before the Public Accounts Committees come into the picture. This measure should bring the source of power closer to the source of responsibility and afford the minister an opportunity to participate meaningfully in administration in accordance with his electoral mandate.

Another issue affecting internal control of the bureaucracy in the African context is politicisation of the organisation. The principle of the British Civil Service, which was inherited by English-speaking

Africa, is that the civil service membership should be completely non-political in the partisan sense. This political neutrality does not mean that civil servants may not hold views on partisan politics like any other citizen, or that they may not vote in elections, but it does mean that a civil servant must not in any circumstances allow the general public to become aware of any political view which he may hold. Nor must civil servants, by standing for elections in the name of a political party, by taking an active part in a political meeting or rally, by being active members of a political party, allow any suspicion to arise that they are other than completely neutral in political matters. This doctrine presumes a substantial agreement between the various political parties of the country in regard to the basic framework of the state.

In some African countries today there is a growing tendency for senior officials to be expected to belong to or at least to subscribe to the political philosophy of the party in power (e.g. in the single-party governments of Sierra Leone and Tanzania). In other countries, senior personnel, though expected to have commitment to political and social goals, are barred from taking part in political activities, e.g. the multi-party governments of the Gambia, Nigeria and Ghana. In view of the circumstances outlined above, the traditional concept of political neutrality has come under review, especially in single-party States. The problem boils down to what new principles, if any, may be developed to promote the political commitment and responsiveness of civil services without sacrificing optimal utilization of the expertise available in them.

In multi-party States, neutrality of the civil service means ability to carry out policy as drawn up by the government in power in the most loyal manner and in good faith. Politicisation in this context means civil servants openly aligning themselves with the party in power against the opposition parties and therefore lending themselves to removal from the civil service on the government party losing elections or being overthrown through other means. The result resembles the American "spoils" system which Africa can hardly afford in its present manpower situation. In the single-party States, it is often argued that politicization is advantageous because the staff in the party and bureaucratic positions tend then to be interchangeable and also because public servants get a chance to improve the quality of policy-making since they are better educated and trained. It should be pointed out, however, that interchange of

personnel between the party and the bureaucracy is meaningful and useful only if the persons involved have similar skills, which is normally not likely to be the case. Secondly, ideological conformity is a frequent qualification for office holding in the single-party system but party loyalty is not necessarily the best measurement of efficiency. This could give rise to opportunism, indiscipline and possibly sychophancy among civil servants. In some instances, the requirement of political conformity is used to terrorise and demoralise public servants who hold different views on certain issues into a position of administrative impotence. Finally, it is not necessary for civil servants to become party members before their superior brains can be utilized in public policy-making. Civil servants, in fact, already participate in policy formulation in ministries in many African countries. For a government to utilize their expertise more fully, it could permit their participation in cabinet discussions as well secure both their official and personal views on policy issues could be obtained.

Apart from the control that is exercised by the government or the minister for that matter in the ministry, there is the control that is exercised by the senior administrators themselves to ensure that important decisions determined at the higher levels are executed in the manner desired.

Effective internal control involves the setting up of specific standards or targets, the comparison of actual performance of work with the standards set, and the application of corrective action where necessary. Simple though it sounds, the control process in African civil services is usually plagued by problems. The information required for a complete control system to be established is often inadequate; frequently standards are not laid down either explicitly or even implicitly and officials are left to control themselves on the basis of information available an actual performance only; occasionally, too, standards exist but are not available for reference or are not established in such quantitative or financial terms as the nature of the work would warrant.

When work schedules have been apportioned and standards have been set for individual members of staff, the civil service system, like any other organization, uses the traditional methods of inspections, rules and regulations, systems of reporting, and supervision, to achieve control. Unlike private business, the civil service typically places considerable emphasis on rules and regulations and on the

written word. The reasons are not far to seek. One is that there is the requirement that he gives impartial or nearly equal treatment to all members of the public; another is the possibility of his being called upon at any time to account for his stewardship, especially where a commission of inquiry has been set up to look into a matter that has direct relevance to his job, whilst his counterpart in the private sector normally looks forward only to the annual or half-yearly meetings of shareholders to do this.

Going to the area of activities and taking notice of what is being done represents one of the oldest devices of finding out in the field the methods being followed, the quality and quantity of work, the attitude of employees and the morale of the work groups. Yet in an attempt to carry out these inspections, the African civil service is not infrequently faced with problems of insufficient technicians or professionals to do the actual inspection of insufficient technicians or professionals to do the actual inspection of development projects as well as problems of impassable access roads.

Such inspections to be useful have to be followed by action or by progress reports. These reports may be oral or written, the former has the advantage of personal contact and the latter the merit of permanent record. For the most effect, both should be used. In the civil service, however, it is the written report that is used more frequently. But for these written reports to have the desired effects, there is need for timeliness, periodic review, feedback and relevance. Yet these are the very characteristics which are lacking in reports written by staff in the lower echelons of the civil services in African countries: Reports often arrive too late to be used meaningfully; reports format and content are not reviewed in relation to the situation and time; reports submitted to superiors are in some instances either not read at all or if read, not commented upon for the presenter to have feedback; elaborate and bulky reports are occasionally presented where relevance or grounds for frequency are obvious neither to the writer nor to the recipient; and reports are frequently presented which relate exclusively to past events and with no projections for future managerial action.

Within the relatively cosy confines of the office, perhaps the single most important way of producing conditions conducive to effective control is supervision geared towards creating rapport for work and opportunity for change in attitudes, skills and knowledge in subordinates. The duty to discharge tasks assigned and to obey

supervisors is pertinent in all organizations. The official secrets act, for example, prohibits civil servants from disclosing information for non-official purposes. The rules and regulations on personnel administration set out the minimum rules of conduct expected of an official and the broad sanctions appropriate for certain categories of misdemeanour. The General or Standing Orders or "Administrative Instructions" prescribe avoidance of conflict between duty and private interests, the giving of undivided loyalty to the State, the extent of involvement of officials in political activities, the avoidance of conduct that would lay the official open to suspicion or dishonesty, prevention from engagement in trade or other forms of private business, and reticence in matters of political and public controversy. And the Financial and Stores Regulations specify the procedure for the custody and management of government funds and stores and the manner of ensuring adequate budgetary control. The significance of these guidelines and the unwritten work practices or conventions lies in their interpretation and application which together provide the main basis for the conscience of the service.

The regulation which has come under critical examination of late in a few African countries is that prescribes the avoidance of conflict between duty and private interests or seeks to prevent civil servants from engagement in trade or other forms of private business. In these days of run-way inflation everywhere, it is difficult for most honest civil servants to make ends meet by relying solely on their income from civil service sources without an attempt to eke out a *supplementary* livelihood from a small private farm or business. Therefore any regulation which prescribes the ownership of private business entirely is likely to be honoured more in its breach than in its observance. What probably needs to be done to make it possible for the behaviour of civil servants in this field to be monitored, is for the authorities to insist that all such businesses should be specifically made known in writing to the civil service leadership and that such registration of business should be accompanied by a declaration that the business should be accompanied by a declaration that the business does not stand to benefit materially from any private firm with which the ministry in which he works has business transactions. However, the situation becomes a little more complex where most of the top civil servants engage in private business in a *big way* which earns them several times more money than the civil service jobs they hold can do. The likelihood then is that some of them might devote

more official hours to their private businesses than to civil service matter; and an even more serious danger is the possible disclosure of official policy information to achieve private ends that could occur in such a situation. Where this stage is reached, there is clearly a need for a re-examination of the position of such top personnel in the civil service.

This brings us to the end of the discussion on the *control* aspect of administrative self-regulation which leaves us with the *influences* internally administered by ministers, as well as administrative superiors and their staff.

By far the internal influence that is subject to considerable debate in public administration is that arising from the relationship between the minister and his immediate administrative advisors in the ministry. On the one hand, the primary role of the minister is to explain government policy to the staff of his ministry through the permanent secretary and to give necessary directions on the implementation of that policy or on changes in that policy. Permanent secretaries should clearly establish their professional competence beyond all doubt, keep in mind always that it is wise to keep anonymous in the political sections of the civil service, and help to influence policy-making in its formative stages in an activist manner. Generally, however, the rapprochement between the two groups can be improved through the organization of joint seminars on a regular basis between them in an atmosphere which makes for free and frank exchange on government policies and their mode of execution. Formal training of politicians in the art of administration would also be considered a step in the right direction. Indeed, there would appear to be the need to have written guidelines on the responsibilities of ministers and their top civil servants, as well as general managers of public corporations.

As already mentioned, administrative officials generally possess vast power by virtue of the considerable discretion they exercise in the formulation and execution of policy. Since their work is set within an organizational context, their judgements are influenced not by the cultural milieu and the personal inner promptings of conscience and reason, but also by the interplay of forces *from outside the individual*, the most notable of which are the variety of human associations within the organization and the beliefs conscience or work-assumptions of the organization *per se*.

The newly-employed individual carries into public office his own

beliefs, attitudes and orientation which have been moulded principally by such enduring forces as the home, the school, the church and other relationships of early life. Once the individual selected for public office reports for duty, his mental and "moral" make-up is most likely to be subjected to restraint, reinforcement or some other alteration by the behaviour of his superiors, peers and subordinates who, through the use of admonition, command, suggestions, guidelines and standards together determine with him the actual role he is expected to play in the organisation. The most powerful forces in this socialization process may be the basic work-assumptions or conventions that pervade the organization and the style of leadership of his superiors.

The British colonial administrators and the early African administrators who stepped into their shoes have bequeathed conventions and customs to African civil services which guide and influence the civil servant in the actual performance of his job. For example, informal rules exist to help the civil servant in a particular situation "to decide whom to consult, when and how, both within the service and with people and groups outside", "to decide, within limits, what disclosures of official information may properly be made and to whom", and "to determine what he can decide at his own level, and when and to whom to refer upwards". Informal sanctions also exist for professional misconduct or for errors of judgement in the application of unwritten rules which embarrass the organization or the government.² However the tumultuous changes which have taken place in the environments of African civil services—especially in the political field—have taken their toll of some of these conventions and customs. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the present crop to top administrators to adjust, and most probably add to, the remaining useful conventions to make them accord more with the requirements of modern administration in Africa. But these men, by and large, have had neither the time nor the peace of mind to carry out this moral duty.

How widely the conventions are applied and what impact their application ultimately has on the public will, to a large extent, be shaped by whether or not the internal management fosters or thwarts their development. Since over-reliance on arbitrary restrictions is the most probable source of danger in this respect, it behoves

² Naurice Wright, "The Professional Conduct of Civil Servants," *Public Administration*, Vol. 51, spring 1973, pp. 4-5.

the administrator—unless the nature of the problems and the calibre of the subordinates determine otherwise—to adopt a *participative* approach in management. This requires that he defines unambiguously the goals or the programmes of their organization for the benefit of his subordinates. In these subordinates he should instill a commitment to the goals through personal influence and example; to them he must bring home the compatibility between their personal and occupational interests; and he must consult them and treat them as persons of dignity and trust. But can the general style of leadership in African civil services honestly be said to be participative when there is very little mutual setting of objectives between superiors and subordinates, when there is hardly any meaningful delegation of authority, when there are scarcely any informal intra-organizational relationships worth mentioning?

The Value Framework

From the account so far given, there is scarcely any that the factors influencing the bureaucrat in decision-making are multitudinous, variable and complex. Yet, even a comprehensive identification of forces, *external* to the individual, would not be complete without consideration of the bureaucrat's own values, even though there is no final word on the extent to which values affect individual behaviour.

Although debate rages in philosophical circles over the differences between the words, values, ethics and morals, the terms will be used interchangeably in this analysis for the sake of simplicity. Values may be taken to consist of determining what is right, fair, just, desirable or preferable. Value systems are *sets* of individual or personal values that exist in scale which reveals their relative importance to the individual concerned. An administrative value then is an enduring belief that in administrative decision-making, a particular mode of conduct, idea or action is preferable to others.

Administrative Values

In almost every country, the public seems to expect public servants to exhibit higher morality than businessmen, mainly because the public service is regarded as more of a public trust than most businesses. Thus, the businessman can discriminate between his clients, can give equal treatment to his employees, can within broad limitations imposed by law disclose or withhold information on the operations of his business, and can accept gifts, all without question of impropriety. This is not so with the public servant from

whom the public demands rigorous objectivity, impartiality and morality.

We have, in fact, already said in the early chapters that in the Africa of the 1980s the public would expect the bureaucrat's ethical armoury not to exclude flexibility, responsiveness to the public, rationality, competence, integrity and loyalty to the State. On integrity in particular, Nigeria has, indeed, inserted in her 1979 constitution a very expensive code of conduct for her public officers, the salient extracts of which are as follows:

A public officer shall not put himself in a position where his personal interest conflicts with his duties and responsibility A public officer shall not ask for nor accept any property or benefits of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything done or omitted to be done by him in the discharge of his duties A public officer shall not be a member of, belong to, or take part in any society, the membership of which is incompatible with the functions or dignity of his office.³

Additionally, every public officer is required within three months of taking office, at the end of every four years and at the end of his term of office, to submit to a Code of Conduct Bureau a written declaration of all property or assets owned by, or liabilities owed to him, his spouse and unmarried children under the age of 21. Possible punishments for breach of the code include vacation of office or seat in the legislature as the case may be, disqualification from membership of the legislature and from the holding of any public office for a period of 15 years, forfeiture to the State of property acquired in abuse or corruption of office, as well as the invocation of the criminal law where applicable. And to cap it all, presidential prerogative of mercy is not permitted in such case under the constitution.

Personal Values

Admittedly, the development of values is affected by the cultural milieu as well as the situation with which the administrator is faced. In fact, the efficacy of the application of values is dependent on the

³ Nigerian Government, *The Draft Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, Government Printer, Lagos 1977.

situation prevailing at the material time. Nevertheless, like mathematics, ethics has its constants and variables. But the constants cannot be sacrificed to the variables. What are these constants then for the African administrator of the 1980s?

We suggest that these personal values should include the development of an informed conscience as well as the determination to render each man his due (that is, to be fair and just), never to use another person as a mere means to his own ends and never to allow another to use him for his own ends, as well as to explain in public his true reasons for his action and to be willing to defend his actions or decisions publicly before his peers.

Naturally, not all people have value for codes of ethics. There are people who regard all ethical codes a luxury, and ideal divorced from the realities of everybody living and situations. Nevertheless, it is worth insisting that such codes have the virtue of serving as a standard against which unanticipated behaviour may be measured, of stimulating the bureaucrat to recognize his biases, and of prompting him to ask the right questions of himself and of others before making a decision.

Conflicts of Interest

Working in an atmosphere of controls and influences by such a variegated array of forces as political decision-makers, work-associates, interest groups, the mass media, the general public and the like, there is little wonder the administrator is now and again faced with an ethical dilemma arising from conflicts of the values and value systems bearing on him. Normally, the higher his position in the hierarchy, the more frequent the incidence of such situation.

According to Kernaghan, the value conflicts to which the bureaucrat is exposed can be classified under three main headings. These are: personal values versus administrative values; conflicts between and among administrative values; and administrative values versus the values of other actors in the policy-making process.⁴

A conflict that is all too familiar to "action-laden"⁵ state agencies in

⁴ Kenneth Kernaghan, "Responsible Public Bureaucracy", *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 16, No. 4, p. 593.

⁵ Action laden agencies are those agencies charged with responsibility for such functions as the letting of contracts, the collection of taxes, the fixing of prices, the issuance or denial of licences, the allocation of raw materials or the paying of subsidies.

many African countries is that between the personal value of *avarice* and the administrative value of *integrity*. Corruption arises basically from this conflict between avarice and the reports of commissions of inquiry leave no doubt in the mind of every administrator of the reality, pervasiveness and frequency of this type of conflict and the stereotyped manner in which it has often been managed.

The civil service operates within a political, social, economic and cultural environment, and while it impinges on this environment, it is bound to be affected by the value system prevalent in the environment. The ethos of African societies tends to encourage corruption: particularly with obligations to the extended family when salaries are generally inadequate, the breakdown of social controls which have come with rapid social change, and in a few cases the absence of a political atmosphere that would draw out witnesses to testify against corruption. What is even more damaging is the lack of curiosity and concern about how neighbours come by their wealth! When we see a man whose honest pay cannot even support a bicycle or a shed go in for luxurious and expensive cars or put up a mansion, we do not care about it; when we see a man living in circumstances that all his life's honest earnings paid in a lump sum to him could not buttress, our conscience is not in any way pricked. And so, increasingly, moral values are chased out of the society. These essentially environmental factors apart, there are administrative drawbacks also which aid corruption in African societies. Typically governmental mechanisms for enforcing rules and regulations are weak; machinery for detecting and prosecuting corruption committed by people in the higher echelons of society is inadequate; there are usually interminable delays caused by overcentralization of government machinery; and very few leaders—especially political leaders—set examples of honesty for others to follow. As long as the political leaders are venal, corruption cannot be effectively tackled in public services.

The civil service as an institution with a relatively large collection of educated elite in the country has an obligation to set the moral tone for the society. In the words of the Udoji Commission, this can be done by making it clear "(i) that public office is a public trust, that honest and efficient performance will be rewarded, that dishonesty and inefficiency will not be condoned, and that corruption will be punished, wherever it is found; (ii) government must make certain that it has the means to find corruption, by a reliable system of

auditing accounts and records; by an open system of communications within government whereby incompetence and dishonesty are given a chance to come to light; and finally through guaranteeing a free press and free expression of public opinion".⁶ We may add that public officers should also be made to declare their assets and liabilities periodically for investigation by auditors. Above all, the political leaders should set examples of honesty and must act, and be seen to act, when corruption is found. It is only then that there can be any real hope of corruption being controlled to manageable dimensions in African societies.

Conflict of values also often occurs between two or more administrative values. One such conflict in the African context is typified by the need of the civil servant to reconcile his duty to be loyal to the government with his obligation to be neutral in partisan politics in multi-party political systems. To ensure the giving of loyal service to the government, it has been suggested in certain quarters that the tenure of service to top civil servants should end with the fall or resignation of the government that appointed them. The main argument for the suggestion is that it would generate in the civil servants the required urge to give of their best to ensure the popularity of their political executives and would make the members of the government have confidence in their chief official advisers. However, a close examination of the remedy proposed indicates that it would operate rather harshly against the public interest unless its application is confined to the really politically sensitive posts such as secretary to the cabinet and the administrative head of the national security network. A number of arguments support the inadvisability of the proposal. Firstly, when one considers the limited field of recruitment of administrative staff of the calibre of permanent secretaries, it becomes apparent that the proposal could produce large-scale dislocation and discontinuity in the administration with every change of government. Secondly, the sense of insecurity which this measure would generate could result in boosting the venality of public officers who may be inclined to "make hay while the sun shines." It could also mean the enthrone-ment and the criteria for appointment to these posts, there would be every likelihood that the morale of the rank and file of the civil service

⁶ Nigerian Government, *Report of the Commission on the Review of Public Services of Nigeria*. Govt. Printer, Lagos, 1975.

would be weakened with a possible lowering of their performance, if persons so appointed did not measure up to the former's expectation.⁷

A less harmful alternative for achieving the desired loyalty and mutual confidence between the political and administrative executives would be as discussed earlier, to improve communication and interaction between the two groups, to organise joint seminars for both groups and to emphasize that the groups are working towards the achievement of the same national objectives.

Another situation which officials face in their daily work where the rules and conventions applicable in the civil service do not provide adequate guidance is the relation of the official to the public. If officials are to have contact with members of the public in such a way as to ensure responsiveness to public demands, they will occasionally be faced with the dilemma of either openly admitting official errors (thus eroding the anonymity of the civil service) or being less than truthful and therefore not doing justice to the desired administrative value of responsiveness to public needs. There are typically, for instance frequent complaints from the public—notable from the mass media—about too much fetish being made of “confidential” information in the bureaucracy. The civil servant often counters this accusation with “I am under an oath of secrecy and therefore cannot reveal the information without the explicit sanction which would, if released prematurely, allow some groups in the society to take unfair advantage of their knowledge (e.g. releasing unannounced fiscal measures) or bring the government, *as distinct* from particular ministers, into disrepute, or in any way let the public into the secret of how the government itself took a decision. It is also proper for tight secrecy to be observed over several issues in the field of internal security, defence and international relations. Beyond these, however, any attempt to treat information on administrative activities as secret, unless the government chooses to reveal it should be condemned, since the practice enables the officials to put out only favourable publicity and inhibit public participation in the administrative process.

Conflicts between administrative values and the values of political actors are exemplified by the requirement of the African civil servant to operate within two value frameworks in his relations with the

⁷ K.A. Owusu-Ansah, “Possible Areas and Strategy for Administrative Reform in Ghana,” *Greenhill Journal of Administration*, Vol. 1, No. 1, April-June 1974.

political decision-maker, or minister. These frameworks are his allegiance to the government of the day and his moral responsibility to the State. On the one hand, he owes loyal service to the government in office. Where the promotion of the minister's interest would lead him to offend his conscience, he is required to make a written record of his objections but to proceed to do the minister's bidding if these objections are overruled in writing. On the other hand, the permanence of the civil service is founded on the concept of loyalty of the civil servant to the state. This kind of loyalty ordinarily coincides with his duty to the government except where the government betrays the mandate granted it by the populace or in some other way is adjudged to have behaved contrary to the "interests of the State", in which case the official may resolve the resulting conflict either by accepting his superior's decision and thereby compromising his standards, by requesting transfer to another government organization or ministry, or by resignation. But, with the exception of civil servants working in national economies with a large private sector like Nigeria and possibly Kenya and those with marketable qualities that can stand competition in the international field, how many senior administrators would want to resign in such circumstances?

The Primacy of Leadership: Administrative Leadership

We may at this stage infer, with some justification, that in the present African context, administrative self-regulation stands a better chance of ensuring administrative morality than power exerted by conventional bodies outside the bureaucracy and that the responsibility for making the adjustment between administrative behaviour and the social values system lies primarily with the senior administrators within the civil service, that is with administrative leadership.

This burden can be discharged essentially in three ways, namely: by improving the organisational climate; by seeking to professionalize administration and by developing wholesome personal ethics. The climate within the organization can be improved through personal influence and example, through vigour and clarity in setting forth goals of government policy, through persistent intra-agency inspection, through the infliction of swift punishment in case of misdemeanour, through permitting and encouraging participation in the policy process by all employees capable

of utilizing the opportunity effectively, and through continuous training and development of subordinates. Professionalization of the civil service can be encouraged in at least three ways, namely by enlarging the opportunities within the organization for self examination and self-criticism, by developing a sense of respect for research, and by emphasizing an individual sense of responsibility, rather than the corporate sense the responsibility of the civil servant as a "professional", quite apart from his responsibility to the government that employs him. And the administrator's sense of personal ethics can be enhanced through training. Conscience is essentially an intellectual process whereby the administrator decides whether an act or course of action is acceptable and should be done or whether it is unacceptable and therefore should be avoided. Feelings and emotions come in only when he is compelled to experience guilt *consequent* to an act that is contrary to his convictions. Personal ethics are, therefore, by and large learnable.

Quite apart from this responsibility to the government, the senior administrators have a duty to society in general by virtue of their position as the main educated class in most of the African countries—a duty to set an example and to lead in the attempt to create conditions for changing the society, as well as for implementing the aims of a society on the move. This obligation they cannot shirk.

Political Leadership

But this total burden of the administrators for administrative self-regulation cannot be discharged faithfully without a congenial political setting within which they can operate and it is the task of political leadership to establish this favourable atmosphere.

What the African administrator would need most in this regard might be the guarantee of reasonable political stability, the establishment of sense of national purpose, the inculcation in the masses of positive attitudes to politics, and the setting of examples of moral leadership.

The political leader can maintain stability in at least two ways: by always keeping in touch with the people whom he leads and by making the political culture of the country unsuitable for the success of military coups d'état. The farther away rulers appear to be from those whom they rule, in terms of shared values, the greater the hostility and suspicion between them and their people. Under these circumstances, rulers may become politically insecure, with the

result that they often turn for support to those among the people who appear to share their values. This series of events can set in motion a cumulative flood of hostility which may lead to instability and perhaps to violence. Also, military coups d'etat are rampant in Africa for a number of reasons. Firstly, the notion is not entrenched that power is legitimate only when it is derived from the authority of the people and based on consent. Secondly, there is very little sense of identity between the armed forces and the civilian elite or between the armed forces and the civilian population at large. Finally, military interventions are not likely to encounter a determined social resistance in the shape of trade union's strikes, civil servants' go-slows, businessmen's decline to co-operate, professionals' "withdrawal of their services". It, however, becomes the responsibility of the political leadership to so carry out its civic and political education as to considerably reduce the opportunities for these armed interventions.

Talking of political education naturally leads to the problem of the high incidence of illiteracy in the population of African countries and the minimal concern of the illiterate people in national politics. Their interest in, and understanding of national politics is thus circumscribed by their level of illiteracy and their preoccupation with the day-to-day struggle for subsistence. There is, therefore, a need for national programmes of political and civic education to be established or reinforced to inculcate in such citizens those attributes which would facilitate the creation of a political culture conducive to the practice of democracy.

Another problem in the political environment of African civil services is that of *Personalized* leadership. Because of the intensely rapid changes taking place in the social, economic and political fields there has been little sense of a *national purpose* which draws people together to work enthusiastically for the cause of building their nation. The governments have tended to be preoccupied with power and its material perquisites. Given the conditions of underdevelopment, power offers the opportunity of a life-time to rise above the general poverty and squalor that pervade the society. With the opportunity to acquire wealth and prestige, to be able to distribute benefits in the form of jobs, contracts, scholarships and gifts of money and so on to one's relatives and political allies, the preoccupation with power and material benefits hardly leaves political leaders any room for reflections on how society can be organized

and ruled to the best advantage of all. As a result, national leaders impose their values on the society which invariably stand the risk of being repudiated and reversed with any changes in political fortunes of the leaders. Although there can be no total agreement on all values, it is necessary for a certain minimum level of agreement to be reached on the fundamental values of the society—if policy-makers are to assess alternatives rationally and if any real and sustained national development is to take place at all.

Such value system may not have any real effect on public morality unless the national political leader shows by deed that he is himself committed to the ideals enshrined in it. His honest behaviour could inspire other politicians and bureaucrats alike to live up to the standards of their leader. Above all, the ideal African leader is one who can convince the people that the welfare does not obliterate individual rights.

In brief, political leadership is expected to set the tone for moral conduct in the nation, to guarantee a certain amount of continuity in administration, to give a definite sense of national direction, and to take the lead in raising the political and civic consciousness of the people.

Conclusion

For the administration, therefore, as for any other public figure, public welfare and personal responsibility must be defined jointly out of the public philosophy and law, as one understands those, and out of one's personal concept of values. These, along with knowledge of prevailing administrative values, are what the bureaucrat takes with him into each decision.

In African countries, public philosophy and law is generally an inadequate safeguard of administrative morality. Administrative leadership can bring about considerable administrative self-regulation if it results in improvement of the organisational climate, professionalizes the administration, and develops wholesome personal ethics in the bureaucracy. But the effects of this drive will be enduring only if this power from internal sources is actually backed by honest, purposeful and dynamic national political leadership from outside.

A Strategy for Administrative Reform¹

We have outlined the main recommendations for changing the machinery of government, the personnel planning, development and utilization, and the administrative conduct of the public services in Africa. But, as alluded to in the *Preface*, there are other equally critical fields of public administration in Africa which cry for thorough investigation. These include financial administration, supply management as well as public policy-making and planning. To facilitate integrated changes among the different sectors of administration and thus prevent avoidable dislocations of complemented sectoral reform programmes, reform plans need to be as comprehensive as possible and have a system-wide outlook. We, therefore, suggest that, *if possible*, each African country should arrange for thorough investigations to be undertaken (preferably by the use of task forces) in these critical administrative fields left unresearched by our team before considering the implementation of the total reform package. However, this is not meant to show that implementation of the reform can succeed only when the planning is comprehensive.

When the scope of the reform programmes has been settled and the necessary investigations have been carried out, it becomes the burden of public administrators to indicate how the adjustments and adaptations needed can be brought about effectively. Obviously it would be both impracticable and undesirable to suggest that a rigidly standard approach could, or even should, be used in any area of administrative activity, because, firstly, the government systems

¹ This part of the analysis draws heavily on K.A. Owusu-Ansah, "Possible Areas and Strategy for Administrative Reform in the Ghana Civil Service", *Greenhill Journal of Administration*, Vol. 1, No. 1, April-June, 1974.

and styles prevailing in Africa vary widely, secondly, personal styles of managing differ and, thirdly, the factors present in each unique situation and organisation vary enormously. We can nevertheless offer broad guidelines or, a checklist, to help both the government and its top administrators improve their ability to cope with changes, and thus ensure that they overlook nothing of importance in their desire to bring about administrative reforms. For purely analytical purposes, the subject is treated in two parts—governmental policy considerations and managerial strategies—although in practice the two intermesh at several points of administrative action.

Government Policy Considerations

As no administrative reform is possible without the support and commitment of the ruling elite, any policy statement by the government to the effect that it attaches as much importance to investments in administration as it does to economic development programmes, that it considers administrative reforms as a continuing endeavour, and that criticisms and suggestions are always welcome for improving the administrative system will be a step in the right direction. And when these declarations are backed by concrete deeds, the atmosphere for nation-wide innovation in the public service will have been set.

The policy can find expression in the institution of a number of structures and processes at the national level. For example, the Administrative Reform Unit proposed to be established in the Office of the Dean of the Civil Services may be made responsible for unified direction, co-ordination and control of approved reform programmes in the Public Service. The functions of the unit would include the provision of standards, the training of reform cadres, the monitoring of reform decisions, and the provision of advice on reform to the government.

As administrative reform committee is another structure whose establishment would need to engage the serious attention of the policy-makers. This organ would consist of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Civil Service (as Chairman), the head of an institution engaged in management research, and the permanent secretaries of the ministries of Finance and Economic Planning, with a senior member of staff of the Administrative Reform Unit as Secretary. Its task should be: to plan a comprehensive administrative reform programme and determine priorities thereof, approve a general

programme of activities of the Administrative Reform Unit, and ensure prompt action on its recommendations and implementation of those that have been approved. To facilitate the work of the committee, it is essential to incorporate into the national development plan the administrative measures needed to ensure that the required structures, processes and resources will be available at the right time and place.

There is need for persons meant to undertake reforms to be well-groomed for the purpose and for special incentives to be instituted to attract the appropriate persons to this activity.

Finally, in order not to cause any acute sense of deprivation in the people affected by the reforms and also to facilitate the work of the Administrative Reform Unit, it is suggested that a special innovation fund for administrative reforms be set up to ensure satisfactory initiation and prosecution of reforms.

Managerial Responsibilities

Having disposed of the purely policy issues of government, we are now in a position to take the plunge into managerial action for change. Broadly speaking, there are at least six phases of managerial action in realizing any change.

These are:

- (i) Perception of the need for change.
- (ii) Planning the change.
- (iii) Communicating about the change.
- (iv) Getting the required changes in behaviour accepted.
- (v) Making the transition from the "old" to the "new".
- (vi) Consolidating the new system.

Perception of the Need for Change

Without a perception of the need for change, many innovations with a potential for producing constructive changes may never gain acceptance. For public servants, this perspective is normally achieved through periodic seminars, sabbaticals and other formal training organized outside the organization, through a habitual refusal to be discouraged in one's efforts to introduce changes until every negative impulse has been thoroughly investigated, and through the ability to question the validity of one's belief or accepted practices constantly.

Planning the Change

To create conditions for the proliferation of reform-oriented staff, at least two basic criteria must exist. These are the ruling elites acceptance and support of the reform idea and their willingness to commit resources for its implementation; and the creation of a climate for innovation within the organization.

No matter what the source of innovation might be, the politico-administrative leadership of the public service should be open to the ideas so generated in the reform programme and must be ready to advocate such reform if the reform is to be successfully implemented.

The creation of a congenial environment for innovation is also crucial to the success of administrative reforms. To achieve the required atmosphere, it is necessary for top administrators to develop in their organizations a climate within which reasonable, calculated risks can be taken and to train their subordinates in the value and proper use of modern techniques and practices. It may also be worth while to reduce to the barest minimum the number of people or organizations whose concurrence has to be sought before the innovation can be adopted.

Communicating the Change

For a change to be realized effectively, management must act positively to forestall all possible sources of resistance. On social grounds, for example, there might be resistance because the intended change is likely to upset the relative importance of occupations, to reduce the value of training achieved by some, to entail some staff moving homes, to mean new patterns of social relationships in the neighbourhood or at work. On economic grounds, an official who has invested a number of years in an organization may have realistic fears for his economic security or loss of career prospects. Psychologically, an official's personal anxieties may be aroused by anything that can be interpreted as a threat.

Politically vested interests can militate against both the planning and implementation of reform. Almost every innovation is likely to be opposed by individuals or groups who feel that they stand to lose in social or economic power or in accessibility or use of governmental power if the innovation gets accepted.

For these reasons, it is often advisable to bear a number of points in mind when implementing important changes. One is that it pays rich dividends to accustom those who will be involved to the idea

that change is inevitable and that it will soon take place. Another practice worth remembering is to make clear at the outset that precisely how the change is to be accomplished has not yet been crystallised into its final form. Those who are likely to be affected by the plan should be told of what is planned and be consulted about what should be done, so that they could have a say in *how* and *when* the changes are introduced. Later, all concerned should understand why the change is necessary, what is to be achieved, what are some of the alternative methods of approach, and what the more important problems that might result from each of these alternatives.

Gaining Acceptance of the Changes

In most changes, it is advisable for the administrator not to move from the status quo to the new conditions until he has obtained agreement on the method of the transition, if he is to reduce resistance to the barest minimum. This agreement can be achieved through the use of rewards, through bargaining, through participation, or through some combination of these approaches. This way, those on whom the ultimate responsibility for implementation will rest, get involved as early as practicable and get committed to that reform.

Making the Initial Transition

Even though it is usually advisable for the planning of reforms to be comprehensive, it is often appropriate for the implementation to be *incremental* because of inadequacy of resources. Implementation of a reform in a ministry may therefore start in a section instead of the whole of the ministry. Likewise it may be wise to begin a civil service-wide reform in the central guidance clusters (.e.g. The Ministry for Public Service, Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Economic Planning) since these direct, co-ordinate and control the other civil service structures centrally.

The transition from the existing state to the planned state can be facilitated in several ways. Timing the change-over to coincide with relatively inactive business periods when possible and with periods when both the civil service leadership structure and the political climate external to it are ready to receive it, is one such way. Grafting the new reform on to the national planning cycle, the budgetary cycle or some antecedent or concurrent reforms successfully carried out by other agencies could be another convenient way of secur-

ing public support. Scheduling personnel changes on a planned basis over a period of time is another. A third method is permitting an operating period for officials to become acquainted with one aspect of the reform before venturing into another change. Although the speed which should be applied to secure the desired change generally depends on the degree of understanding and acceptance of the reform, a gradual transition is normally advisable when the change contemplated is attitudinal.

Consolidation and Follow-up

The administrative Reform Unit should be charged with responsibility for continually pointing out to the operating ministries/departments the seriousness with which the government views improvements in administration, ensuring that proposals for reform are considered with all despatch at the appropriate levels in the service, and also that the approved programme is implemented in an equally business-like manner, as well as carrying on its shoulders the enormous task of evaluating the results obtained by such implementation. Within the operating agencies too, management will be well-advised to institute systematic and thorough follow-up procedures, be alert to unexpected secondary and after-effects, ensure that both the results of the change and the way in which they were achieved are evaluated completely and objectively.

It is felt that such a strategy may go a long way to ensure successful implementation of most administrative reforms. But in using the strategy, we need always to bear in mind these memorable words of Machiavelli which appear in *The Prince*.

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor "more difficult of success," nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all who profit by the old order and only lukewarm defenders in those who would profit by the new order.

Appendix 1

Summary of Proceedings of the Nairobi Round-Table Conference: Towards a Profile of an African Public Service

As mentioned in the Preface, the second AAPAM Round-Table Conference was convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8th to 15th August, 1979 purposely to discuss the research-based document entitled "Towards A Profile of African Public Service in the 1980s" which now constitutes the substance of Chapters in Part II. At this conference, AAPAM was congratulated for taking the bold step of organising the production of an *excellent* document which provided the necessary framework for discussions. Participants, however, felt that two or three more such research-based Round-Tables would be required before a fuller picture of the profile could emerge.

What follows in this chapter is an attempt at summarising the proceedings of this second Conference. The organisation of the Chapter follows the order of proceedings adopted at the meetings: First, a resume of each presentation is given; this is followed by a critique of its substance; then an epitome of the discussions that ensued concludes the proceedings on the subject.

A Survey of Problems, Goals and Tasks: Presentation

An attempt is made to identify the main development problems which African governments are faced with and which they are likely to grapple within the next decade. Africa must devise goals and strategies for achieving them which would at least prevent the situation from worsening in the 1980s. These new governmental policy strategies would affect the public services which should in turn make the necessary adjustments in their orientations, structures and strategies to meet the challenge.

The extant problems of African countries included the generally

poor economies and underdevelopment, political instability, high rates of illiteracy, as well as lack of economic and social infrastructures, skilled manpower, capital and technological know-how. The study recognizes that these problems of the 1960s and 1970s will be carried over into the 1980s with increased complexity and frequency due mainly to the influence of the changing African and world politico-economic relationships. To cope with these problems, African governments have to redesign their objectives to remove any doubts about their central theme being the improvement of the quality of life of their citizens within affordable costs. This may necessitate the need for greater involvement by governments in mobilizing and managing resources in a manner that would bring the benefits to a greater number of people.

The expected changes in governmental goals and strategies should form the back-drop providing the socio-economic and political policy parameters within which African public services in the 1980s would have to be oriented and have to show results. If the public services are to fulfill the expectations of these governments in the 1980s, they will require the following qualities and characteristics: flexibility in organisation structure and operations; capabilities for efficient job performance; broader vision and increased knowledge and skills relevant to the new tasks; teamwork and better understanding between politicians and public servants; recruitment and promotion of personnel on the basis of merit; increased resources for personnel training and better human resources management; dedication to duty; speed of action and economic use of resources; and improved administrative responsibility to the populace.

The implications of these attributes for changes in the nature of organisation structure, personnel administration and administrative conduct of the public services of Africa are posed in the form of questions to which subsequent presentations address themselves.

Critique

The critic (Mr. Sam Edokpayi) generally agreed with the form and substance of the survey, as presented, of the problems, goals and tasks of African public services. However, he felt that the study could have benefited from acquaintance with the reports of international meetings (notably by Economic Commission for Africa) on African public services in 1978 and early 1979 and by greater emphasis on

the relevance of its observations also to middle and lower level personnel in the bureaucracies.

According to him, these meetings critically questioned the relevance of Africa's development options and priorities and the strategies that have for too long placed reliance on foreign exchange earnings through export of new materials and import of manufactured goods on development through foreign aid and trade; on the adoption of the lifestyles and concepts of development of the industrialised countries; on the use of GNP as an adequate index of growth and development as against improvement in the quality of life. They also criticised the tendency for African countries to remain receivers and users of development concepts and imported technology. Moreover they decried Africa's loss of its own personality and self-confidence.

Regarding personnel, the critic warned against the tendency to ignore the role and importance of the middle and lower categories in the public services—those at the “doing” level who execute and carry out instructions. As such personnel could be and had often constituted, the real bottleneck in many services that affect the private sector, he felt their training, motivation and remuneration were as important as those of the senior cadres.

Discussions

In the discussions that followed, a number of elaborations were made. On the quality of life, participants reiterated the point made in the presentation that African states should be clear as to what exact role the public services should play in the provision of services. Also, agreeing with the view that middle and lower level personnel should be accorded a degree of importance, some of the participants felt that the training needs of those cadres particularly required *radical* re-examination if the challenges of the 1980s were to be successfully met.

On the other hand, the majority were of the opinion that reform attempts should be geared towards making *gradual* evolutionary changes to the existing administrative systems rather than towards revolutionary transformations. To them, there was too much theorizing today on administrative reforms which did not take into consideration the limited resources capabilities of the countries concerned; and it was now time for a stop to be put to the practice.

In general, participants agreed that the Africa of the 1980s would

have to be different in many ways from that of the 1960s and 1970s even though most of the problems of the 1980s would be carryover from the two previous decades. It would be important to face this reality and try to define new objectives and strategies for resolving them. This would necessitate flexibility in organising government business, the re-allocation and re-training of manpower as a whole, the improvement of data collection methods and information management as well as the education of the masses and the public servants to understand their rights, duties and obligations.

The Pattern of Structures at the Centre Presentation

The message of the presentation on 'structures at the centre' is that in order to make for development-oriented administration, the pattern of structure at the centre of African public services should be modified to ensure that:

- (i) the structures required to provide leadership or guidance and co-ordination at the centre are equal to the task; and
- (ii) the functional or ministry-type organisation of government business at the centre can respond quickly to rapid environmental changes or facilitate the prosecution of development projects.

As far as leadership is concerned in most African countries, the heads of the Civil Services are the Permanent Secretaries to the President and Secretaries to the Cabinet but their leadership and co-ordinative functions are undefined and inadequately performed. In spite of the wide powers they ordinarily wield, the Heads of civil services find the job too demanding to enable them adequate time for reflection, reform or effective co-ordination of the Civil Service.

For effective direction of the public service in the reasonably large African countries, it is suggested that the existing combined post of Secretary to the President, Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service (which was the pattern in *almost* all African countries)¹ should be split into the following two positions: Head of the Civil Service, who apart from being Secretary to the President and Secretary to the Cabinet, will provide the much-needed political

¹Zambia and the Sudan have already split the post. But in the Seychelles a troika based on the functional specialisation exists in place of the Permanent Secretary to the President.

direction of the Civil Service; and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Civil Service, who will be primarily concerned with personnel policy and administration, management consultancy and administrative reform of the Civil Service. In addition, the structure for public policy-making should be strengthened by the creation and articulation of a "Think Tank" or a Policy Analysis Unit linked to the Office of the Cabinet. Also, *as far as possible*, policy planning units should be established in all key ministries and charged with responsibility for new and long-term policy options and the preparation of long-term plans of ministries. Furthermore, the relations between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economic Planning, where the two are separate structures, should be so streamlined as to minimize the inter-ministerial conflicts that at the moment characterized them in some African countries, and so as to facilitate the role of the ministry of Economic Planning as coordinator of national economic development. Moreover, to facilitate the effective monitoring of the key development projects, the "Central Operations Room" concept may be applied, as an additional monitoring device to the field monitoring system, whereby the physical and financial expenditure in relation to set targets on key projects and policy decisions will be centrally portrayed in the Office of the Head of Government to increase the chances of timely and authoritative follow-up.

The Ministry-type or functional organisation of government business is also certainly not the best for adapting to rapid environmental changes or for the implementation of development projects. But as hierarchy cannot be eliminated in complex organisations, it has to be modified. In the African context, this modification can take the form of supplementing the hierarchy by the use of project teams or by the creation of public enterprises. Also, to make for greater effectiveness in ministerial action, the corporate staff units of the ministry, namely the Personnel, Finance and General services *Branches*, of each ministry should, over a number of years, be gradually developed into *Divisions*, staffed with personnel capable of performing the functions of an accomplished personnel manager, financial manager and management analyst respectively. Finally, the career structure for Specialist in the Civil Service should be so modified as to make it possible for some of them to be ultimately appointed Permanent Secretaries; and Heads of Departments under a ministry should be allowed *direct* access to their respective

ministries to enable them share more fully in policy formulation, provided the Permanent Secretaries concerned are put in the picture as soon as practicable regarding the substance of the discussions between the minister and the Heads of Departments.

Critique

In the critique that followed, Mr. J.A. Gethenji underlined two main points already made in the body of the presentation: these concerned the need for more delegation of authority in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service and the observation that co-ordination between the ministries of Finance and Economic Planning, where the two are separate entities, often depended on inter-personal relationships at the top of the two hierarchies.

To him, there was a need to delegate more of the responsibilities of the Heads of the Civil Service to obviate the pressures on this important office. The problem of the fear to delegate brought about by lack of trust and loyalty should be considered a matter of the past and Africa had to examine itself critically to see whether it could get the right leadership under the existing structures. For example, would the situation improve if a minister was located within the office of the Head of State with a Permanent Secretary to take off the responsibility for Public Services? If this was done, the responsibility for the Civil Service would still be in that right office, the office of the Head of State, and the latter would still use the Civil Service to achieve the desired ends. If this arrangement was adopted, institutions like the ministries of Finance, Planning and Public Service would have to work more closely with the Office of the Head of State to give the required guidance on public policy decisions and plan implementation.

As regards the question of the relationship between the Ministry of Finance and that of Planning, he also agreed with the presented report that some of the problems depend on the type of people appointed to head of these agencies. He felt, however, that the system would work better if the two functional roles came under the umbrella of a single structure.

Discussions

Quite a number of points were made during the discussions. These are summarized below:

If African states were going to discuss their government structures

they had to be clear in their minds what they were trying to achieve with the structures. The new structures adopted should include well-defined powers, duties and responsibilities of the various government ministries and the reorganisation should be carried right down to the various Divisions and Branches within the ministries and down to the individuals manning the actual desks.

It was conceded that as political bosses would continue to have the final say on whatever structures were recommended at the centre and remain responsible for policy decisions, it would be inadvisable for public servants to dictate patterns of structures that should be established. But because it was absolutely necessary for the office of the Secretary to the President, the top most public servant, not be overloaded with other responsibilities like those of public service reform to which he could not devote much attention, participants agreed there was much sense in the proposal to create a separate ministry to deal with all matters of public service, taking cognisance, of course, of the size of each country and its political philosophy and structure.

Suggestions were also made for the pooling of resources on a regional basis for research and data collection which could be used for policy analysis. Apart from this kind of regional co-operation, individual countries should try to establish their own "Think Tanks". The relationships between ministries and the Think Tanks could be greatly enhanced through co-operation, the latter agencies being seen essentially as normative policy analysis and data processing bodies, not as agencies to take away some of the traditional policy-making responsibilities of the ministries.

The appointment of specialists into top administrative posts should be welcome, but care must be taken not to allow these scarce people to be appointed at lower levels because there would not be enough of them in their critical fields. The conflicts that appeared to have been experienced between the generalists and specialists could be reduced if allocation of resources during Budget time had been done with a degree of co-operation.

To make for the retention in the rural areas of staff in critical shortage, there must be effective delegation of authority. Very often the most experienced staff had been posted to the centre leaving the periphery with people who might not be equal to the tasks in the localities. To remedy the situation, attempts should be made to provide promotional opportunities and other social benefits and

considerations that would make it possible for officers to be retained at these levels.

Finally, it was stressed that the monitoring of projects should be basically the responsibility of functional departments which must be adequately staffed to provide the needed information, and should not be the *primary* obligation of the Central Operations Room which should rather be more concerned with *evaluation* of programmes and policies.

Organization for Managing Development at the Local Level: Presentation

The study has revealed that African countries support decentralization as a means of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the management of public services but that the support for it appears in most countries not to have been translated into reality as a result of which participation from below in decision-making has been kept minimal. If African countries are really serious about decentralization their governments must take adequate measures that would enable the local inhabitants to be involved in the decision-making machinery and the implementation of development programmes. In this way the decentralization philosophy would be viewed as a means of greater protection of citizen rights and a method of guaranteeing an improvement in the conditions of life for all. It provides the dignity and physical satisfaction for everybody by making them have a share in the control and management of their environment and the structure of power. Governments have to see the ultimate goal of development in terms of benefits to their people and realise that people are not only a resource for development purposes but, more importantly, also the beneficiaries of development. Very few countries can actually escape the need for decentralization in order to speed up the decision-making responsibilities, because very often the central authorities are ill-equipped in knowledge of local conditions and norms to be able to make the right decision in matters of local significance. Nor would most central authorities be in a position to know all the resources available in all parts of the country to be able to tap and utilise them fully. Through effective decentralization these can be brought to surface for development purposes by those at the local level who are charged with development responsibilities.

There are certain constraints which inhibit effective decentralization in African countries and which have to be carefully noted.

These include the general underdeveloped character of African countries, the low level of national unity and identity, the poor financial resources base and the non-availability of skilled manpower, especially at the local level. The issue of national unity is a crucial factor in determining the decentralization process from the centre downwards, especially in African countries with a multiplicity ethnic groups as the adoption of decentralized structures, especially those allowing for increased autonomy for local areas, may tend to exacerbate the problems connected with poor level of national unity by giving disparate groups avenues for expressing separatist tendencies.

The use of local authorities is the most common way of decentralizing governmental authority to the people. However, it has been found out that where these structures exist, they are often there only in name and they have been denied the powers to levy taxes and run certain services which are vital to the communities. The case for proper financial base for local authorities has, for example, been discussed by many governments where it has been felt that unless local authorities are given a good financial or tax base, effective machinery for collection of revenue does not appear to exist. Another constraint that hinders the development of effective local government structure is the lack of trained personnel. It has been observed that local government service is not attractive because employees are in most cases left at the mercy of their councillors. There is a lack of security of tenure and as such very few qualified people ever get attracted to work in the local authorities, especially in the rural local authorities.

In order to remedy these ills, the following measures are suggested:

- (a) Because the level of national identity in African countries is relatively low, and resources in terms of men and money are in critical supply at the localities, the pattern of local government which has the greatest chance of viability and growth is the one which makes the fullest use of central government manpower resources and facilities at the local levels, de-emphasizes parochialism, while genuinely allowing the local people to take part in important decisions.
- (b) Financial resources of local authorities may be augmented by the central government making more tax sources available to

local authorities; by the central government sharing some types of national funds with local authorities on an agreed formula; by increased efficiency in local rate allocation secured through the tying of local revenue collectors to an incentive system, through the bringing of nominal roles up-to-date and through the use of village committees to collect the rates on a commission basis; and by the local authorities changing their orientation in financial administration, in the short-run at least, from the current consumptionist pattern of local expenditure to a pattern geared more to the provision of investment projects of short gestation periods.

(c) The staffing situation in local authorities can be improved through the adoption of the unified local government services, the secondment of Central government staff or the integration of the personnel system of Central and local government services. It may also be improved through increased opportunities for professional development for those serving in the rural areas and the rotation of staff between rural and urban areas.

Critique

Mr. Ndugu R. Baguma critically commented on the presentation. In his opinion decentralization was a very crucial factor for reaching the lower levels of administration and could be meaningfully made to help the local people reach a higher level of welfare through their local representatives. But decentralization itself would be meaningless unless and until it was accompanied by powers to make appropriate decisions at the local levels. It was, therefore, necessary to determine and map out clearly what areas needed to be decentralized and then to implement the decisions made at this level without seeking clearance up the ladder, otherwise uncalled-for delays, bottlenecks and general inefficiency might be created. A properly decentralized structure enabled the local people to be consulted in the process of decision-making on matters that affected them. He agreed that it was when people were involved in policy-making at the local levels that they developed a sense of commitment to the decisions and programmes made and the chances of success were enhanced.

He cautioned, however, that using central government personnel for the collection of revenues for sharing with local authorities to plan for huge expenditure budgets which the central authorities

might find difficult to collect. To make the local authorities feel more responsible for their actions, it was necessary for them to be directly saddled at least with responsibility for the planning and collection of specified local revenues.

Discussions

It was felt that the study should have given full account of the experiences with experimentations in decentralization found in such countries as Tanzania, Kenya and the Sudan for comparative purposes. In the absence of those insights it was difficult to make meaningful comparisons between countries. There was also a terminological confusion in the use of the term "decentralization" and it is felt that attempts should be made to differentiate between "administrative" and "political" decentralization to clarify the type of decentralization that was being talked about.

Another consideration was that the relationships between the central governments and the local authorities must be sound if the decentralized systems were to work effectively. To this end, the terms and conditions of staff working in the local and central authorities should be comparable to allow for free mobility of labour between the two public institutions.

The relative statuses of urban and rural local authorities were also discussed. In most African states the urban local authorities were relatively viable because they had better sources of revenue and smaller areas to administer, but the same could not be said of rural councils because those ordinarily had much larger jurisdictional areas, could not relatively reach the people easily to provide services or to collect taxes unpopular with the people. It had also been observed that the staffing position in the urban local authorities was not as deplorable as in the rural local authority. In fact some of the urban authorities were able to attract better trained and experienced staff than the central government. Given the prevalent state of rural local authorities, it was necessary for African states to consider restructuring them to improve their capability for delivering the goods to their local inhabitants.

There was plenty of room for the improvement of African local authorities and these included the following suggestions:

- (i) When decentralizing there was need to see what had been achieved in the past before mapping out the strategy needed for the future.

(ii) Administrative reformers should concentrate on administrative (rather than political) aspects of decentralization in determining suitable areas for decentralization and the kind of relationships, fiscal and administrative, that should exist between the central and local government units.

(iii) Use should be made of the two studies done by the United Nations on decentralization for development but these studies should be adapted to suit the conditions pertaining in the individual African states when determining the decentralized structures of the 1980s.

But the problem of decentralization should also be seen in its political context. The arguments which had been advanced against decentralization by national governments were based on the fact that no politician was willing to liquidate his own power base. In order to decentralize effectively, therefore, there was the need for political commitment and goodwill to be aroused and maintained.

One other important thing which should be borne in mind, the participant continued, was that unlike parastatals, if local governments were to function well there was the urgent need to consider how to stimulate viable structures from below upwards. The experiment in Tanzania appeared to be a good example of decentralization from below. But as a word of caution, African states should avoid the mistake of establishing units of government at the local levels merely to serve the top and not the people.

The Role of Public Enterprises: Presentation

The role of public enterprises in national development is a subject that has been extensively debated in international and other seminars without any tangible steps being taken to facilitate improvements, yet this sector is very vital in the economies of African countries. What is perhaps needed now is a re-examination of this important sector with a view to evolving a better approach to the establishment and management of public enterprises in the 1980s.

The main factors that have adversely affected the management of the public enterprises of the recent past include poor planning, lack of feasibility studies, uneconomic siting, and much dependence on imported models and technology. Another problem has been the lack of clearly defined role of the public enterprises vis-a-vis those of

the civil service and the private sector. The former set of problems can be minimized if feasibility studies are prepared for each public enterprise before it is created. As regards the role of public enterprise, the statement of objectives for each public enterprise should contain a clear indication of whether or not the enterprise is required to make a profit and if so, the extent of the profit; managers of public enterprises should isolate accounts for social services from the purely commercial operations and show unambiguously how the social obligations imposed on them by the government affect their returns if they are to avoid unnecessary public blame for shortfalls that are the making of the central government. Additionally, public enterprises, through their boards of directors, come directly under the responsible minister, not under the ministry of political heads; so the permanent secretary has no right to issue instructions or even offer advice to the enterprise without the express sanction of the minister.

Among the commonest internal management problems in African public enterprises are imprecise definition of operational objectives, non-involvement of subordinates on objective-setting, inadequate delegation of authority, and inadequate motivation as well as ineffective control systems. As regards resources, finances and personnel of the right calibre are usually in short supply. The essentially operational problems can be solved or reduced through effective application of the *principles* of Management by objectives. To understand the rigours of direct competition from the private sector and the constricting effect of direct government control, industrial enterprises which are too weak in terms of resources can at times be brought under the managerial canopy of a "holding corporation" to enable them grow in relative security and peace to maturity and profitability.

Ineffective boards of directors have also plagued some public enterprises in many countries. In some cases, the managing directors have been completely hamstrung by powerful boards. In others the post of managing director has been combined with that of chairman where the appointees have exerted power out of all proportion to their legal entitlement. In still other cases, permanent secretaries appointed to boards have been delinquent in attendance at the boards meetings and have often been deputized for by their subordinates who have found it difficult to commit their organizations to any definite lines of action. It is suggested that the

combination of chairmanship of the board with managing directorship could make for a more decisive, dynamic leadership and reduce the conflicts that occasionally plague the relationships between boards and managing directors in some African countries, provided that the external controlling agents like the legislative, the external auditors and management auditors are vigilant.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, external controls are exercisable through legislation, external audit and monitoring systems. While there is need to establish external auditing units to help in ensuring financial efficiency, it is also advisable to create external consultancy services with local personnel backing to review the managerial operations of the public enterprises from time to time to determine their relevance and new roles in the economy. National legislatures should also equip themselves with appropriate information on public enterprises to enable them to discuss the affairs of the enterprises meaningfully and thus influence the performance of such enterprises for the better.

Critique

In commenting on the study, Mr. S.K. Mbugua confirmed that there was need for some amount of managerial autonomy to be accorded the enterprises and to eliminate some of the intermediate level controls which only served to confuse the man at the local level. He also agreed that political patronage in appointments often interfered with and adversely affected the operations of the parastatals, and that the practice should be replaced by appointments on the basis of merit. Furthermore, he felt the relationships between government and the parastatals could be improved if there was a clearly defined reporting system, a thing that was conspicuously absent in many African countries.

As regards resources, the critic who is himself the Inspector of Statutory Boards in Kenya, emphasized that most of the financial problems the parastatals had suffered had been worsened by government regulations and pricing policies which had forced many of the enterprises to seek financial allocations from the exchequer. He expressed the hope that training of public enterprise personnel would be intensified in critical areas of shortage and deficiency and that the Institute of Public Administration would assist in achieving this objective. Finally he stressed that to ensure efficient utilization of the available resources, the inspectorate of statutory boards must

be endowed with authority and capacity to examine all aspects of management of the public enterprises.

Discussions

Of the various country papers submitted to the Round-Table discussions in Nairobi, at least three—those of Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria—expressed disappointment with the performance of public enterprises. The paper from the Seychelles took a cautious approach to the growth of the parastatal sector. In spite of the many reservations made both on paper and in the discussions, the delegates, by and large, expressed confidence about the future. The problems of public enterprises could be overcome through a more intelligent, and notably systematic and comprehensive, approach to the management of such institutions.

On the key question of control of these enterprises the general tone of the discussions at the Round-Table pointed in the direction of a relaxation. Many public enterprises had suffocated under too tight, and often arbitrary, control measures initiated by government officials. A vicious circle was often created when the public enterprise was established on flimsy grounds, without a proper feasibility study. The inevitable result was poor performance and a tendency by government to apply greater control over the enterprise. This, the delegates stress, must be avoided by a more careful approach to the setting up of such enterprises adopted. In this connection, while "holding company" concept was recognised in the discussions as one possibility of shielding companies from harsh governmental control and nursing them to maturity, some delegates suggested that the most important thing was to equip the public enterprise for a system in which it could successfully compete with private or co-operative type of companies.

Some delegates argued that the public enterprises should not be allowed to become monopolies where it could be avoided as the pressure of competition was often a powerful means of making the managers alert to weaknesses in the organisation. The existence side by side of a co-operative or private enterprise in the same sector also provided a means of assessing performance by the public.

Complaints were raised that the public have little influence over the parastatal enterprises. They seemed to be the exclusive concern of a small group of officials. One way of spreading the involvement in these enterprises, according to one of the Round-Table delegates

was to sell shares in these companies to members of the public. Although some delegates expressed reservations about this proposal because it would favour only members of the wealthier elite, it was, nevertheless, identified as one possible measure to increase the public accountability of these enterprises.

Although the composition of the management boards could be improved irrespective of the above measure, it would also enhance the quality of the members elected to the board, since members of the public would have a vested interest in getting committed and competent people to run these enterprises. Many delegates joined in the call for improvement in the quality and commitment of members elected or nominated to the management boards of the public enterprises. The system of having ex-officio representation came under criticism as this particularly seemed to lead to disinterested and superficial involvement by the directors.

Even with the proviso that interests should be represented on boards, the Round-Table discussions revealed great dissatisfaction with the procedures for appointing directors. Delegates claimed there was still too much room for a 'personalization' of such appointment. One delegate suggested it might be time to seek appointment to boards of public enterprises of private citizens with a credible record in public life and particularly in business management. Others, however, meant that such a proviso might also increase the possibility of the minister choosing a "personal" friend.

Manning of the Public Service: Presentation

As a result of the existence of a low degree of competence at independence and the generally inadequate training facilities and programmes thereafter, personnel administration in African public services cannot typically be said to be equal to their present tasks or to the challenges of the immediate future.

Many governments have haphazardly handled manpower projections, creating critical shortages in several fields, especially in the professional, technical and managerial cadres. Hardly any organised linkage exists between the training institutions and the public bodies for which the staff are trained in some countries whilst in others—in a few others—the scientific techniques of manpower planning are virtually unknown.

Recruitment and selection of personnel are in some cases hampered by such factors as political influence and lack of competi-

tive plans. General indiscipline has made the observance of codes of conduct a rare phenomenon in the public services of some of the countries in Africa. Similarly problems in mobility, training, compensation, performance appraisal and industrial relations are rampant in the public services of many of the countries.

It is suggested that to improve matters, a number of measures, including the following, may be taken in most of the African countries:

(i) The directorates of personnel—which at present concern themselves with advising the government on personnel policies and administering approved personnel programmes—should become a constituent part of the ministry for public service/civil service whose duties will involve the addition of responsibilities for management services and for the initiation and monitoring of administrative reform. To facilitate the discharge of its responsibilities, the directorate—now a division of the ministry responsible for civil service matters—should have a complete and accurate knowledge about the level of present manpower resources in the civil service, comprehensive information about the relevant manpower environment, and dependable information on what the government would want the public service to do in the near future. The administrative capability for personnel planning and development should also be considerably strengthened in the operating line ministries.

(ii) There is need for a comprehensive job evaluation to be conducted in the majority of African civil services, not only to establish relativities in pay but also to make for more even avenues for promotion in the services. Whereas it is recognised that governments in Africa may not have the wherewithal to match the salaries being paid by the private sector, they should strive to improve the non-salary benefits which are paid to their staff.

(iii) Public Service Commissions should retain their independence from the government and the ministries in certain specified areas, particularly in the setting of selection standards and disciplinary appeals, to facilitate their supervision of a unified career service. To make for despatch of government business as well as ensure that the permanent secretary/head of department could be held fully accountable for what happens in his ministry, the Public Service Commission should delegate considerable

authority in respect of appointments, promotion and discipline to permanent secretaries/head of departments. There is, of course, the danger of victimisation and unfair treatment but all this pales off where the Public Service Commission or another body had appellate powers which aggrieved civil servants can cause to be invoked.

(iv) Selection of staff for the civil service should generally be governed by equality of opportunity and of accessibility. Where it becomes necessary to abandon the principles of merit and equality of opportunity, the government should strive to recruit the best within the limitation imposed by the prevailing constraints.

(v) Interest in training should be considerably aroused. Training has to be put on a more systematic basis, and training standards need to be set in more precise terms in many African public Service. Identification of training needs have to precede any training courses attended by the staff on the civil service, the plans for training have to fit the requirement of the job, and adequate attention has to be given to delegation of authority and job instruction as training devices. Specific schemes of evaluation have to be designed to assess training programmes in relation to their ultimate impact on performance.

(vi) Merit should be the *main* basis for promotion in the civil service. Seniority should be taken into account only where the performance ratings of competent candidates are adjudged equal.

To prevent "in-breeding" and to provide an opportunity for the inflow of fresh and innovative ideas, the personnel system should make room for lateral entry (especially of scientific and technical personnel) into the civil service, and should at the same time provide adequate safeguards against the intention being defeated.

(vii) Performance evaluation should be a continuous *open* interaction between the superior and his subordinate with a view to improving the performance of the latter. For the evaluation to fulfil this purpose, it is necessary for supervisors to be trained in the job of evaluation *formally* through training sessions on what to look for in staff reporting, and *informally* through discussions with their superiors.

(viii) There is also a need generally for machinery for staff consultation and negotiation relations to be established in some and revitalized in other African countries.

Critique

In this critique of the study, Dr. Udo-Ada made four main points. The first was that even though in his opinion, profiles for the 1980s should start with a scenario of that period, the study seems to assume the future would be the same as the past, a position which could not be sustained; also the study did not review the extent of preparedness of the public services personnel systems to meet the development objectives and task of the 1980s. Secondly, the study did not make sufficient suggestions for bringing about the ideal of an efficient, competent, adequately motivated, dedicated, innovative, honest but inexpensive public services in Africa. Thirdly, while the modern personnel management techniques dealt with are generally good to use, there was no indication in the report on how they had been effective in other countries where they were practised, on how they could be modified to suit the cultures of African states or on how to stop politicians from interfering with their utilization.

His final point was about training: African countries needed accelerated training programme to improve performance in their public services but the training content would in each case have to be re-examined for relevance to the needs of the public service. Training programmes should take the following points into consideration: "the general high level of education now available, the expectation of the educated work force, trends in technological advancement round the world, problems of keeping managerial systems up-to-date, how to meet qualitative and quantitative requirements for public services in the 1980s, and provisions for attitudinal training". It was important to ensure that training for the 1980s was not done for its own sake; African governments must have clear objectives in view.

Discussions

The ensuing discussions involved three main subjects. These were manpower planning, training, and motivation and morale in the public services.

The participants agreed that although effective manpower planning depends considerably on political direction, every opportunity

should be given to the people whose capabilities were to be improved to train in the professions of their choice and there should be room and scope for mobility. More efforts should be geared towards producing development-oriented personnel like engineers, doctors, technicians and other personnel in skills in critical shortage in the economy. Also comprehensive manpower planning should take into account the total manpower requirements of the country, not just those of the public services. Also, it should be the responsibility of the government to plan manpower for the national economy as a whole. Manpower utilization was another major problem facing a number of African countries. People trained in specific fields had been asked to do jobs for which they were not trained. Sometimes too professional personnel had been wasted on routine jobs like the signing of payment vouchers and fuel procurement instead of being made to spend more time on essentially professional matters.

Training in Africa was also an area requiring a thorough examination, even though it was generally acknowledged that training must not be seen as a panacea to Africa's developmental ills. Course contents should be carefully studied to ensure their relevance and top administration should be made aware of their future responsibilities and be exposed to training for the future. A determined effort needed to be made to alter the generally lethargic attitude to training prevalent in most African public services. There was also an urgent need for re-orientation of the training institutes to improve their capabilities for meeting future challenges, and for the systems of training in each country to be effectively integrated or co-ordinated to make fuller use of the available training resources and facilities as well as avoid duplication of efforts.

On morale and motivation in the public services, the suggestions were no less significant. The low morale in the public services was sometimes traceable to inadequate leadership by the senior officials who had also tended to forget the field staff in matters of promotion, housing, equipment, transport and support personnel. At other times relative disparity in pay and perquisites within the public service and between the different economic sectors was to blame for the ebb in morale. Africa should look into the effects of social values, work habits and attitudes to work in the performance of the public services. University researchers should help find out what these

effects were and how the resultant problems could be removed.

But improvement in morale did not necessarily lead to efficiency in organisational performance. The aims of the individuals or groups have to be positively linked to the goals of the organisation. One way of doing this was to appraise the performance of the individuals and groups with a view to assisting them to develop within the context of the organisation. The open system of performance appraisal had thus come into vogue in a few public services in Africa as one such means of achieving this end. But experience in Nigeria cautions against introducing the system without adequate psychological preparation and education of the public servants concerned.

Promoting a More Responsible Administrative Conduct: Presentation

The objective of the analysis is to examine problems being experienced in African countries in their attempt to achieve responsible administrative conduct and to suggest ways of raising the standards in a general way. The overall trust is to show that the present external pressures on the bureaucracy in these countries do not constitute an effective force but that the internal structures and values stand a chance of making an impact on administrative conduct only if the political leadership aids them.

External sources of power on African bureaucracy include the national legislature, the courts, external audit agencies and the Ombudsman. Other such sources are interest groups like the trade unions, political parties and the mass media. But the capabilities of these institutions are such that they have to be reinforced to enable them to influence the performance of government business in any meaningful and favourable way. As a consequence, it has always been found appropriate to rely on a set of internal measures in the public service to supplement the external pressures.

Administrative self-regulation involves the internal organisational climate, the working relations between ministers and their bureaucrats, and the value systems prevailing in the public service.

This internal regulation of the public service has to be improved through de-politicization of the public service; through the regular setting of more specific and time-bound objectives; through improvement of the reporting system to ensure timeliness, periodic review, regular feedback and relevance; through a more flexible interpretation and application of rules and regulations; through

regular joint seminars between ministers and permanent secretaries to improve their working relations; through the adjustment of existing work assumptions and conventions in the public service to properly reflect the priorities of modern African administration; and, finally, through a change of leadership style from the generally autocratic and *laissez faire* types to the participative type.

There is also a necessity for codes of ethics to be prepared or reviewed for African public services to reflect these values: personal values like an informed conscience, fairness and justice, honesty and candour; administrative ones like integrity, responsiveness, competence, flexibility and accountability. To make these codes effective, a machinery for ensuring adherence ought to be established and public education on these ethics extensively carried out.

In the normal course of work, conflicts occur between personal values and administrative values, between and among administrative values, and between administrative values of political actors. In the resolution of these conflicts in most cases, however, the administrator should be guided by the *public interest*, defined to mean a normative standard which helps the official achieve a working compromise between the competing claims of various group interests, without sacrificing the interests of the inarticulate, unorganized majority and without losing sight of the residual long-range interests of the state.

In African, administrative self-regulation is a more effective means of ensuring administrative morality and this is primarily the task of the senior officials within the public service. This burden can be discharged essentially in three ways: by improving the organizational climate, by professionalizing administration, and by developing wholesome personal ethics. But this internal regulation of the bureaucracy cannot by itself secure the desired responsible administrative conduct unless the national political leadership provides a certain minimal guarantee of continuity in administration, takes a lead in the political socialization of the masses, shows a sense of national purpose and sets the tone of moral conduct for others to emulate.

Critique

In her critique of the study, Mrs. L. Kesselly suggested that a better title for the presentation would be "Certain Acceptable Behaviours in Society" since the question of moral conduct should not be

restricted to the public servants alone but should be examined in relation to the whole body politics. She agreed, however, that it was a responsibility of senior public officials to set the tone for moral conduct in the society. She also accepted the point that external structure could provide insufficient control but queried why the study did not explain the failure of judicial structures to enforce the kind of conduct required in the public services. Finally, she contended that since ministers were answerable to the Cabinet, and ultimately to the people, for all activities within their ministries, they had the right to intervene more in the administration of the ministries. It was the duty of permanent secretaries, she continued to help their ministers understand the importance of controls in finance and budgetary issues so as to help in enforcing them.

Discussions

Most of the discussions on the theme centred around the office of the Ombudsman, his appointment, control and effectiveness. Delegates felt that this institution was very new in Africa and where it had been established, for example in Mauritius and Tanzania, it had experienced a lot of problems and had never really worked.

In contrast, the participants contended the situation in the United Kingdom and West Germany, was relatively satisfactory. In the United Kingdom, the Ombudsman is appointed by the Parliament and can only investigate cases brought to it by or through the members of Parliament. He has no dealing with the public, has no powers of its own, and his office is not used to take or remove the powers and duties of the Public Service Commission". In West Germany, instead of an Ombudsman's office, there is an administrative court established to sit and hear cases concerning exclusively matters of administrative law like non-issue of licences, abuse of office, arbitrary decisions, use of excessive powers, etc. The basis for the success of the institutions in those countries had to be examined.

In a separate meeting later, the participants adopted the following code of conduct for African public servants. (*Appendix 2*).

Appendix 2

**AAPAM Declaration on Ideals of Public Service
Made at Nairobi on 15th August, 1979
Code of Ethics**

To none will we deny Service
To none will we delay Service
To none will we pervert Service

In the belief that the political, social and economic development of a country requires a leadership from public office holders which has disciplined commitment to national goals reflecting integrity, dedication, loyalty and public accountability; the African Association of Public Administration and Management makes this public declaration. This declaration defines ideals of public conduct shared by all members of our association,

- (a) to enhance the confidence of the people of Africa in their public services; and
- (b) to fulfil the responsibility of the public service to declare its own code of conduct.

The following ethic is deliberately cast at the highest level of moral aspirations, in the belief that our societies wish their public services to reflect the best of societal moral and professional standards:

Discipline.

Public Office is a position of trust, holders of which have a social contract requiring the highest standards of self discipline in the service of their people. This places a heavy responsibility on the authorities within the service to ensure that the enforcement of

discipline, upholds the rights of the individual whilst at the same time protects the society from incompetency, laziness and corruption.

Integrity

The *public officer* is adjured to observe absolute honesty on all his official acts. This injunction extends beyond financial consideration to include unmerited advantage of any kind to the person, family or friends.

A *Public Officer* should have no other source of income than that which he is permitted by the rules of his service. The financial interest of the *Public Officer* must not be in the conflict with his public duty. Therefore, in financial matters, openness should be paramount.

Dedication

The *Public Officer* contracts with all the people of his country to deliver service with devotion and consistency to the best of his ability; to seek at all times to improve his performance by increasing the scope of his knowledge and skill; to avoid delay, prevarication, or discrimination in the service of the public.

Loyalty

Any holder of a *Public Office* owes loyalty to the government. In his official position, he must advance, develop and defend the policies of his government at all times. Loyalty extends to all colleagues. In particular, a *Public Officer* has a professional duty to defend his subordinates against unfair or discriminatory actions. In the last resort, consistent conscientious objection to policies of a government must lead to resignation from office.

Impartiality

In the execution of his duties, a holder of *Public Office* must exercise scrupulous impartiality and demonstrate professional objectivity.

Professionalism

The *Public Officer*, at whatever level, is a member of a distinct and recognized profession. He shall behave in such a way as to enhance the image of his profession.

The profession of the Public Service has the institutional responsibility to establish and maintain organizations and programme for self-appraisal of achievement, self-improvements of capabilities, and self-regulation for enhancement of service effectiveness.

Accountability

The holder of a *Public Office* is at all times personally accountable for his official actions. This accountability embraces all levels of responsibility.

Nairobi, 15th August, 1979.

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