

Ministry of Public Administration,
Independence Square,
Colombo 7. 31st October, 1980.

To: All Secretaries of Ministries
and Heads of Departments.

The Reform of the Administrative Structure
and Procedures

At the Cabinet meeting held on 28.08.79, the Hon. Prime Minister referred to the need for extensive Administrative Reforms if the programmes of the Government were to be implemented expeditiously and efficiently. Consequently, Memoranda embodying several proposals for the purpose of undertaking reforms in the administration were submitted to the Cabinet, by the Hon. Minister of Trade & Shipping, Hon. Minister of Public Administration & Home Affairs, Hon. Minister of Lands & Land Development and Mahaweli Development and the Hon. Minister of Fisheries. A Consolidated Report dated 10.12.79 which summarised the main recommendations of these four Memoranda (prepared by a group of officials from the Ministry of Plan Implementation), was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 09.01.80.

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2. The Cabinet at this meeting decided to accept the proposals summarised in paragraphs 3 to 8 of the Consolidated Report and also required that the details concerning their implementation be worked out by the Development Secretaries Committee and submitted to Cabinet. A Sub Committee consisting of Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretary, Ministry of Trade & Shipping, Secretary, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Deputy Secretary to the Treasury was appointed by the Development Secretaries Committee at the conference held on 29.01.80.

3. At the meeting on 30.07.80 Cabinet granted approval for the recommendations 1 to 25 of the Committee Report.

4. I forward in an annexure for your information and necessary action the recommendations numbering 8 - 19.

Sgd: D.B.I.P.S. Sirivardhana

Secretary,
Ministry of Public Administration

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8. A Development Action Committee should be formed in each Department and Corporation consisting of the Head of the organisation and representatives from the staff and constituent Sub-committees formed under different functions/operational work areas/organisation sub units/locations of the Department/Corporation concerned. The Committee and also its sub-committees should collate, generate, coordinate and implement suggestions for improving organisational performance. The Committee should meet at least once each month and the records of such meetings with an evaluative report of performance improvements achieved, should be submitted by each Head of Department/Corporation to its supervisory Ministry regularly and without undue delay for further action to be taken by such Ministry wherever necessary. Also informal work groups with smaller membership should be formed along the main managerial and operative levels in each organisation. Such informal groups consisting of a supervisor and his main subordinate staff at the next lower level, should meet regularly each week to facilitate more effective planning, coordination and review of daily work as well as to propose and implement suggestions for performance improvement in their own work places. Other Committees in organisations examining waste, surplus manpower etc. should be dissolved and their functions taken over by these institutional arrangements.
9. The main functions of the Development Action Committee, Sub-Committees and informal work groups should be to increase productivity and efficiency, reduce cost and waste, ensure optimum use of human and material resources and also enable the organisation to effectively plan, coordinate and achieve its programme results. Honoraria of an adequate magnitude should be paid as an incentive to all members of each Committee, Sub-Committee or work groups in relation to the value of the suggestions which are approved, to yield the results expected.
10. It should be the responsibility of each Ministry and Department to calculate and formulate work norms of output/performance linked with attendance for all grades of staff considered appropriate. A team of officers of each Ministry together with the Departments thereunder, should be set up to formulate work norms. The Ministry of Public Administration should examine and finalise such work norms and the incentive bonus payments/double increments or other incentives which are feasible and payable by Government.
11. All Ministries and Departments should give greater weightage to performance outputs and the work effectiveness of staff over claims of relative seniority when selections/recommendations are made for the award of foreign scholarships, seminars, observation tours, training offers etc.
12. A simplified form of Management by Objectives (MBO) should be introduced in a pragmatic way in Ministries and government departments, giving due consideration to the nature of objectives, work processes and results intended to be achieved by such agencies. In applying MBO systems to an organisation

adequate emphasis should be given to the need for continuous definition of task responsibilities of teams or work groups and to the review and evaluation of team performance of such functional groups in organisations.

13. Each Ministry and Department should examine the clerical and office system of their organisations, and design changes for adopting a secretarial system of work with a central registry of files as an alternative to the subject clerk system, wherever such changes are necessary and consonant with the needs of the organisation concerned. In the event of the subject clerk system being continued in any organisation, there should be more effective supervision of clerical work by the staff officers concerned. Improvements in office layout and a closer physical location of staff in relation to the supervising officer for facilitating supervision also needs to be effected.
14. Each Ministry and Department should prepare comprehensive work Manuals covering all work operations in such organisations at all work levels, defining the aims, basic work procedures and work levels, defining the aims, basic work procedures and work steps involved in discharging such work. However, the application of such work manuals should also bear consideration to situational requirements and the need for flexibility and adaptation.
15. Each head of a Ministry/Department should be held responsible to assess overstaffing and such excess staff may be redeployed in other work areas requiring staff within their agencies. However, staff found to be in excess by independent checks done by the Budget Division of the Treasury or the Management Services Division of the Ministry of Public Administration may be transferred to other Ministries, organisations or work areas. The Budget Division should be reinforced by the appointment on a permanent basis of staff competent in work study to discharge such checks.
16. All heads of Departments and supervising officers should be clearly instructed to use and deploy staff to obtain the maximum use of human resources. Supervisory officers should regularly check the work-output of staff, attendance registers, absence during working hours and lack of punctuality, personal transactions in offices, misuse of telephones etc. Supervisory staff should be located in close proximity to their subordinate staff and be responsible for the discipline, grant of leave and maintenance of personal files of personnel who are directly responsible to them. The responsibility for the supervision of staff of a particular level should devolve on the supervisory staff at the next higher level. Disciplinary action should be pursued against supervisory personnel concerned for neglect of supervisory functions and duties outlined above.

17. Staff should wherever possible be placed in posts in their areas of residence. As a preliminary measure all transfers in appropriate cadres and services in the public sector should be frozen and future transfers considered only for placement of applicants in their districts of residence. The transfer of personnel outside their District of residence should be done only in instances of established guilt after a formal disciplinary inquiry which necessitates such a transfer. There should also be adequate legal or constitutional safeguards preventing the wrongful transfer of public officers for personal or political motives.
18. All supervisory staff should ensure that they do not function independently of each other, when functioning as a team helps to conserve resources or to achieve objectives better. Arrangements should be explored for the pooling of resources, such as clerical staff, typing and stenography staff, vehicles etc. in order that optimum use can be made from such resource pools. Authority and discretion should be given to Heads of Departments and Corporations to arrange for optimum utilisation of resources by measures for greater coordination and mutual sharing in their day to day work.
19. While a Unified Administrative Service has its advantages, nevertheless in many Departments with more specialised functions such as Labour, Co-operative, Lands, etc., it is observed that there is inadequate specialisation on the part of officers liable to transfer. It should be the responsibility of each Ministry and the Department under it to identify those posts which call for some degree of specialism and to devise a method of improving the specialist knowledge of the staff either by longer retention of transferable officers or the appointment of officers to Departmental grades recognising, however, that the latter would expect promotion prospects.

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