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Report on the need for an Organization and Methods  
Unit in the Sierra Leone Public Service and on the  
Establishment and Operation of such a Unit

By

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I. Introduction

In her report of 9 March 1964 on "Civil Service Training in Sierra Leone", Miss Avice Turnbull (Chapter XIX) states that when the specification for the post of Vice-Principal of the Civil Service Training College was drawn up, it was decided to seek a candidate with experience in Organization and Methods work "because there was already an interest in the Government in the possibility of some O & M work being undertaken...." In fact Miss D. M. Rogerson, a former United Kingdom Treasury Organization and Methods Officer was appointed to the post.

2. About that time an Official Committee on Office Management was set up, under the Chairmanship of the Establishment Secretary, including as members the Deputy Establishment Secretary, the Establishment Officer of the Ministry of Works and the Government Printer, with Miss Rogerson as Secretary. The committee was concerned with the review of clerical and filing procedures; arrangements for security of papers; design of forms and with advising, where invited, on the relationship between the volume of work of any particular office and the staff required to perform it. These are all typical O & M tasks. One of the results of the work of the Committee and of Miss Rogerson was a publication: "Registry Services - a Short Manual of Instruction". This publication is typical of the type of result that may be expected from one aspect of O & M work.

3. In an address given to a Seminar of Senior Public Servants organized by the Civil Service Training College in Freetown in December 1965, Mr. Ghufuran A. Faruqi, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme, Sierra Leone stressed that

training was not enough and that efficiency was dependant upon appropriate management structures, good organization and systematic methods of work. He felt that an Organization and Methods Unit in the Sierra Leone Government could be of help in achieving these ends and that this was the sort of project which might attract United Nations assistance.

4. One of the members of the staff of the Civil Service Training College is at present taking an O & M Officers' Course at the Royal Institute of Public Administration in London with a view to teaching O & M as a subject in the College on his return.

## II. Terms of Reference

5. In a letter of 5 May 1966, the Establishment Secretary, on behalf of the Sierra Leone Government, referred to the December 1965 Seminar and requested the Resident Representative to arrange for a short-term assignment by a Regional Adviser to study the problems involved in the setting up of an Organization and Methods Unit by the Government.

6. The terms of reference proposed were :-

- (a) to examine carefully the need to set up an O & M Unit in the Sierra Leone Civil Service
- (b) if there is need, to advise the Sierra Leone Government on the establishment and operation of such a Unit
- (c) to implement the proposals of setting up an O & M Division if ultimately accepted.

7. I arrived in Sierra Leone on 12 July 1966 to carry out the first two parts of the terms of reference and this report covers these parts. If the Sierra Leone Government accepts the proposals contained in this report, recommendations are made as to how a Unit can be set up. If it were to be decided to request the United Nations for

assistance in setting up such a Unit, no doubt sympathetic consideration would be given to the request. It was felt, however, that the Government might need some time to consider the proposals made and the conditions that would need to be established to ensure the satisfactory working of such a Unit.

### III. Establishing the Need to set up an O & M Unit

8. In order to establish whether or not an O & M Unit is necessary or desirable for the Sierra Leone Public Service, I believe that it is useful to set out in abbreviated form the kind of services that such a Unit could be expected to render to the organizations that it serves. In this connection, it would appear to me quite appropriate and desirable that an O & M Unit, if established, should be required to undertake assignments in all public corporations and Local Government Units as well as all Ministries and other administrative organs of Central Government.

9. An O & M Unit might be expected to undertake tasks in the following fields :-

#### (1) Machinery of Government

To advise the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on :-

- a) Grouping of administrative functions to form the Ministries and Departments required for the efficient conduct of public business.
- b) Ensuring that responsibility for all government functions is allotted to one or other of the Ministries or other Government organizations and that there is no over-lapping of functions.
- c) Securing that the general organizational structure of Ministries and the allocation of senior staff to them reflects the importance assigned to those Ministries by the Government for the future of the country.

- d) Establishing machinery for co-ordinating the work of the various Ministries to achieve the goals and meet the aspirations of the Government and the people.
- e) Establishing criteria for deciding what functions should be allocated to Public Corporations rather than Ministries.
- f) Laying down standards relating to the powers, functions and organization of Public Corporations when established, including political responsibility, composition and functions of Boards of Management, duties of General Managers, financial responsibility and control, engagement and conditions of staff.
- g) Local Government organization, including size of Units, number of levels of local authorities, functions to be performed, relations with central government, criteria for creation of urban or municipal authorities, financial powers, staffing.

(2) Ministerial Organization

Advising on grouping of like functions within Ministries into operational units including ensuring the separation of "service functions" from "substantive work" and ensuring that proper provision is made for performing all service functions such as :

- a) Establishments
- b) Finance
- c) Transport
- d) Building Maintenance
- e) Purchasing and Supplies
- f) Registries

(3) Managerial Activities

Checking that adequate arrangements are made for the proper management and control of all units of government including :-

- a) Proper supervision at all levels.
- b) Controls and safeguards built into the system of working.
- c) Delegation of powers and functions and the establishment of adequate but not excessive machinery for control of delegated functions.
- d) Establishment of adequate machinery for co-ordination, consultation, and communication of information within the organization.

(4) Methods of Work

Recommending improved methods of work and, where possible, standardizing procedures for operations that are common to more than one unit. Areas in which improvements may be expected are :-

- a) Registries and Filing
- b) Purchasing and Supplies
- c) Establishment Routines
- d) Training
- e) Messenger Service
- f) Buildings Maintenance, Cleaning, etc.
- g) Transport Operation
- h) Financial Procedures
- i) Collecting information for decision making
- j) Economic and Social Research Methods
- k) Collection and Processing of Statistics
- l) The approach to the job - the need to find solutions to problems, and to make decisions.

(5) Office Machines and Aids

- a) Establishing criteria for the consideration of requests for office machines and aids.
- b) Undertaking studies on the need for new office machines and aids.
- c) Establishing norms of work for machines and controls over their utilization.
- d) Recommending whether the use of certain machines should be centralized or decentralized.
- e) Standardization of makes and types of machines used in the public service with a view to reducing initial and maintenance costs, as well as simplifying the maintenance of machines and the training of operators.
- f) Ensuring adequate preventive maintenance and repair of office machines, including determining levels of spares which should be held.
- g) Proposing additional uses for existing machines which are not fully utilized.

(6) Economic and Social Development

In view of the special emphasis being given by the Government to planning and executing projects, programmes and plans of economic and social development, the following illustrations are given as to how an O & M Unit could help to secure the implementation of plans :-

- a) Advising on the general level of sophistication of plan development and implementation that can be expected to be borne by the existing administrative structure.

- b) Recommending administrative improvements in the system of planning and implementation.
- c) Advising on the establishment and improvement of development units such as :--
  - i) Planning Organs: Planning Board; Sectoral Committees; Planning Office; Development Units in Ministries
  - ii) Organs serving the Planning Organs: Statistical Offices; Credit Organs; Units undertaking feasibility studies.
- d) Recommending procedures for the co-ordination of planning and development procedures and for control and follow-up of implementation of projects, programmes and plans.

10. It is emphasized that the role of an O & M Unit is envisaged entirely as providing a staff function - it is there to make studies, to advise, to recommend, but not to decide. The decision on whether any recommendations could be adopted must remain with those responsible for the operation of the Unit or the Service. It is the job of the O & M Officer to persuade, to cajole, to recommend. It is the duty of the controlling officer within the service concerned to decide. On the other hand, once the decision has been made, the O & M Unit can, if requested, help with the implementation of the recommendations.

11. I believe that no Government in the world has its organization so well geared, has its procedures so perfected, that an efficient O & M Unit could not find many improvements to recommend. It is also a truism that administration never stands still - there is a constant process of evolution and change in any organization. New tasks are added to old, new outlooks generate new procedures, the State is constantly being pressed to undertake additional functions. In developing countries,



great emphasis is placed on social and economic development, which necessitates new organs for planning and implementation, new procedures in Ministries, new outlooks among public servants.

12. Many countries in Africa as well as in the rest of the world have found it desirable to set up O & M Units to help with the gearing of government machinery and practice to meet the challenge of new tasks and new problems. The United Kingdom, the United States and France have long had such units. The countries of Africa which have established units or employ O & M Officers include Ghana, Nigeria, UAR, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Burundi, Lesotho, Swaziland, East African Common Services Organization, Ethiopia, Sudan.

13. I believe that the setting up of an O & M Unit could be very beneficial to the administration of government in Sierra Leone at all levels and in all its aspects.

#### IV. The Establishment and Operation of an O & M Organization in Sierra Leone

14. The following are among the criteria for the setting-up of a successful O & M Organization :-

- (1) In view of the very nature of the work concerned, the O & M Unit, to succeed, must be established as high up in the hierarchy, and as near the centre of the machinery of government, as possible.
- (2) The Unit must have the wholehearted support and encouragement of the highest political and administrative authorities: Prime Minister, Ministers and senior officials in the organs which it serves. Such support must be widely publicised, at least within these organizations.

- (3) The staff of the Unit must be senior; of high calibre; experienced administrators; trained in O & M techniques. They must be recognised as possessing superior knowledge of administrative organisation and procedures. They must be capable of influencing senior officials in the organisations in which they undertake assignments.
- (4) The Unit must have a fairly precise definition of functions, which must be publicised. The terms of reference for each assignment undertaken must be clearly spelled out and made known to the staff of the organisation in which it is to be undertaken, as well as to the O & M staff themselves.
- (5) The basic task of the Unit should be understood to be to induce the staffs of all Government Organisations to want to improve their organisation and their procedures; to get them to suggest and introduce improvements, to discuss their problems and difficulties and to be receptive to new ideas and worthwhile suggestions. It is far more important to convince people to carry out suggestions (which they should adopt and come to regard as their own), than to write impressive reports making recommendations which have not been fully discussed with the people concerned and which will probably never be implemented. Reports should be records of action taken and agreements reached rather than elaborate blueprints which will be filed and pigeon-holed rather than acted upon.

15. Taking these criteria and the administrative structure of Sierra Leone into account, I recommend that the following organs be established as soon as possible :-

- a) An Organisation and Methods Unit
- b) An Administrative Improvement Committee.

THE ORGANISATION AND METHODS UNIT

Location

16. This Unit should be established in the Prime Minister's Office to serve all Ministries, public corporations, Local Government Units and other public organisations in Sierra Leone.

Functions

17. Its functions should be those shown in paragraph 9, (1) to (6) above.

Staffing

18. The Unit should be under the control of an officer of at least the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary, reporting direct to the Establishment Secretary. He should receive training in the control and direction of O & M work and he should be employed full time on this work.

19. He should be supported by two Assistant Secretaries who should receive training and be developed as O & M Officers. Initially, there should also be six staff drawn from the Executive Grades, who should be trained as systems analysts and/or forms designers.

20. It is recommended that an O & M Adviser (Training) should be requested from Technical Assistance sources (e.g. United Nations or the United Kingdom) for a period of two years. The above posts should be established before he arrives, but he should assist with the selection of suitable staff to fill them, from among serving public servants of considerable experience. It is important that these posts be filled as quickly as possible after the arrival of the Adviser, as only by involving all the staff of the Unit with the Adviser from the earliest possible date can satisfactory results be obtained.

Training and Staff Development

21. As soon as possible after recruitment, the Senior Assistant Secretary should be sent overseas on a four-month scholarship to study

O & M practices (e.g. on a U.K. Treasury or R.I.P.A. Training Course) and to observe O & M Units in action (e.g. in Canada or U.K.). In the meantime, the O & M Adviser should take charge of the Unit and spend a considerable amount of his time giving practical training to the Assistant Secretaries and the Executive Class staff members. The training and development programme for all staff members should be carefully worked out so that all Executive Class staff members are fully trained and effective within one year and all senior staff within two years. The training and development should include participation in practical O & M surveys led by the O & M Adviser. On the return of the Senior Assistant Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries should be sent overseas, one at a time, on four-month scholarships similar to that undertaken by the Senior Assistant Secretary. At this stage the Senior Assistant Secretary should work closely with, understudy and be trained by the O & M Adviser. At the end of one year at most the Senior Assistant Secretary should take over control of the Unit from the O & M Adviser. The latter would, of course, be immediately available to give help, guidance and support for a further year. From the beginning of the second year it should be considered normal that the Assistant Secretaries, with the help of Executive Staff, should undertake assignments largely on their own. Important assignments, particularly in the field of Machinery of Government, should be undertaken by the Senior Assistant Secretary himself.

#### Initial Tasks

22. In order to convince all Ministries and other organizations that will be served by the O & M Unit that it is the intention to use the unit as an instrument of administrative improvement to help ensure efficiency at all levels, it is important to select as a first assignment one that will strike everyone concerned as significant. I would recommend an assignment such as reviewing the organization of the Prime Minister's Office itself.

23. So far as other Ministries and organizations are concerned, it would be wise, in the early stages, to select assignments which would undoubtedly demonstrate the benefits to be derived from O & M work, e.g. improving the registry service or simplifying some aspect of establishment work which would be of obvious benefit to the staff of the Organization concerned.

#### THE ADMINISTRATIVE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

##### Membership

24. It is recommended that the Administrative Improvement Committee be constituted as follows :-

Chairman	Secretary to the Prime Minister
Members	Establishment Secretary
	Secretary, Training and Recruitment
	Principal, Civil Service Training College
	Financial Secretary
	Permanent Secretary, Development Office
	A Representative from one of the Public Corporations
	A Representative of Provincial and Local Government Units
Secretary	Head of the O & M Unit
Adviser	O & M Adviser

##### Functions

25. (1) To co-ordinate the work of the Development Office, the Establishment Office, the O & M Unit and those responsible for training activities.
- (2) To develop policy, establish priorities and approve general programmes of activities in the O & M field. The programmes should be prepared and submitted

by the O & M Unit.

- (3) To ensure that decisions are taken as quickly as possible on all recommendations made in O & M reports and to report to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet all cases where decisions have not been taken within three months of the presentation of such reports.
- (4) To receive quarterly report from the O & M Unit (and from Ministries and other Organizations concerned if they wish to make them) on the implementation of approved recommendations arising from O & M reports and to report to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet all cases in which it appears that there has been undue delay in implementation.

N.B.

Similar functions in relation to Manpower Planning and Training could be given to the Committee if desired.

Frequency of Meetings

26. The Committee should meet not less frequently than once in every quarter.

Support Services

27. The O & M Unit should provide support services to the Committee: secretarial, minute taking, fact finding, etc.

INAUGURATION OF THE O & M SERVICE

28. It is important that all concerned should understand right from the start that the O & M Service is being treated seriously and has the wholehearted backing of the Government and the Administration for its work.

29. It is therefore recommended that the following steps be taken on the inauguration of the Service :

- (1) The Prime Minister should issue a statement on the new service, its aims and objectives, which should be well publicised.
- (2) A short brochure, with illustrations and diagrams, should be prepared by the O & M Adviser, attractively printed and widely distributed free of charge within the public service. This should be done within two months of the inauguration of the service.
- (3) The Civil Service Training College, in co-operation with the O & M Unit, should conduct :
  - a) O & M Appreciation Seminars for Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Senior Assistant Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and other senior officials, including those from public corporations, Provincial and Local Government. Attendance of these officials should be made compulsory. Ministers could also be invited to attend. Such Seminars need not last longer than one day. They should stress the need for improving and developing the administration to meet modern needs, the plan for administrative improvement and how the O & M Unit and O & M techniques can help to implement it.
  - b) A series of O & M Orientation Courses for Supervisors. Such courses should probably last 4/5 days and attendance of all supervisors should be compulsory.