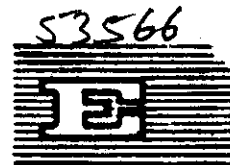


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THE UNITED NATIONS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME:
ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND APPROACH

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THE UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME:

ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND APPROACH^{1/}

After the Executive Secretary had described the role of public administration in modern African society and after the consultants had discussed four major aspects of public administration (personnel administration and training, organization and methods, administration for development and development planning, and local government and decentralization), I would like to report to this distinguished gathering the United Nations Public Administration Programme. I hope that an understanding of the nature, scope, and approach of the Programme would be of assistance to the deliberations of this Conference.

Let me point out at the outset that in relation to the real need of the developing countries, the United Nations Public Administration Programme is small in size. When it was started twenty years ago, it was a programme of under \$100,000. It reached \$1 million in 1953, \$2 million in 1962, and has now exceeded \$3 million a year. In recent years about half of the total is for Africa.

The Programme comprises three parts: country projects, regional projects and inter-regional projects. It is basically a programme to co-operate with the developing countries in strengthening their public administration for national development. The most important part of the Programme is country projects. In fact both the regional programmes and the inter-regional programme are to support and supplement the country projects or to increase the capability of the United Nations Secretariat at Headquarters and in the regions for backstopping country projects.

The historical development of the Programme was described in document E/4296. On the whole the Programme has given strong emphasis in training. In Africa, as in other regions, the United Nations has co-operated with a number of countries in establishing or strengthening their schools or institutes of public administration for the training of their civil services. Co-operative arrangements were completed, in most cases successfully, with the institutes in the United Arab Republic, in the Sudan, in Ethiopia and in Ghana. They are continuing in Libya, Niger and Somalia. United Nations assistance has also been rendered to some African countries in other training activities, including the training of personnel in public enterprises. All experts sent to countries also have training as part of their responsibilities; they are expected to train their counterparts to take over their jobs. In addition, fellowships were granted for the training of nationals of developing countries.

The country programmes also include projects to improve civil service systems and personnel management, as well as personnel administration in specific fields of administration.

^{1/} This is the text of a statement by Chi-Yuen Wu, Director of the Public Administration Division from Headquarters.

Another type of country projects is to assist the governments to improve organization and methods. This includes technical co-operation in establishing and developing O and M agencies and in advising on such specialized fields as automatic data processing, records management, purchases and supplies. For example, our colleagues in the Economic Commission for Africa have been involved in projects in this field in certain West African countries, for example, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

The United Nations has been assisting governments to improve the administration and management of public enterprises for a long time. The most important project in Africa at this time is a Special Fund Project in East Africa to assist the Railways and Post Authorities of the community.

Considerable effort has been made by the United Nations in recent years to link together efforts at administrative improvements in a country. Thus in Libya or in Somalia, for example, in addition to the institute of public administration there is a team of experts dealing with the improvement of civil service and O and M. The two or three groups of experts in a country are expected to work together in a joint effort to improve the administrative capability of the government.

The need for a comprehensive approach to public administrative problems has led some countries to adopt major administrative reform. (The United Nations has a Special Fund project in Iran to assist in carrying out a major programme of administrative reform, but no similar project in Africa at this time.)

In recent years technical co-operation projects have been extended to local administration or sub-national levels of government. For example, local government experts were sent to certain East African countries, including Lesotho, Tanzania, and Uganda. The United Nations is also discussing with the government of the UAR regarding a Special Fund project to strengthen an institute of local administration.

Country projects have been supported and supplemented by regional and inter-regional projects. Technical assistance is also rendered to developing countries at their request in the form of short-turn missions by regional advisers and inter-regional advisers. These two groups of advisers work in a co-ordinated way and supplement each other. They constitute additional expert resources at the disposal of the African countries.

Regional projects also include study tours and training courses, to supplement country projects. In the period 1962-1968, two study tours and five training courses were organized by the Public Administration Section of ECA. In addition all seminars also have training implications.

Seminars, both at the regional and at the inter-regional levels, are convened in order to clarify certain important or urgent problems. The conclusions reached by the seminars would be of assistance to the developing countries in solving their own problems and to the United Nations

Secretariat in strengthening its understanding of problems involved and thus increasing its capability to backstop effectively its technical co-operation projects in the field. The ECA, in the period 1962-1968, held about ten seminars in the field of public administration.

In addition to the backstopping of country projects and the provision of inter-regional advisers, the inter-regional programme of the United Nations Public Administration Division at Headquarters include comparative studies and inter-regional seminars. These, it should be emphasized, are operation-oriented projects and not purely academic or intellectual exercises. From our twenty years of experience in providing technical co-operation to developing countries in the field of public administration, we have no doubt in our mind that, for the practitioner, there is no ready prescription to deal with a problem under all situations and all systems. For the theorist, it would be a mistake to try to build a model for application to all countries, or even a model for all developing countries. Our understanding of an administrative problem will be improved, if we first make a comparative study and then expose the tentative findings of such a study for critical review by experts representing different political, economic, social and administrative systems, different stages of development, as well as different disciplines. The final guidelines proposed (normally in the form of possible alternative solutions under different circumstances) should be dependent on the actual environmental factors and should take fully into account the elements of changes. This is the way in which a comparative study is undertaken by the Public Administration Division.

Inter-regional seminars have also been used, especially to deal with new or special administrative problems which require the attention and contributions of senior administrators. The method and approach are similar to those for comparative studies, but in an inter-regional seminar, the country reports are normally submitted by the country participants and not prepared by the Secretariat and the country participants are normally senior administrators and heads of institutions, instead of technical experts and specialists from developing countries.

All the subjects selected for comparative studies and for inter-regional seminars under the inter-regional programme are based on actual need of the developing countries as evidenced by country requests for technical co-operation or by conclusions reached in international meetings like this Conference. Recently we have reviewed the major public administrative problems which the developing countries are facing and are expected to face in the 1970's, in connexion with our analysis of the public administrative sector of the international development strategy for the Second Development Decade. Some of the major problems selected for special attention may be of interest to this Conference and are listed below:

1. Administrative aspects of development planning

The administrative variable was missing from the development plans in most countries, and targets were set without taking into account the

administrative capability of the government machinery. This has been one of the key factors (but not necessarily the most important) responsible for a persistent gap between development targets and results of implementation. A sound development policy should call for planned expansion of administrative capability as an integral part of the process of planning. Our programme includes a comparative study (as well as regional and inter-regional seminars) on this subject and also an inter-disciplinary methodology study on the appraisal of administrative capability for development.

2. Administration for change

The public administration as well as the economy and the society of the developing countries are changing and will continue to change - at an increasingly rapid rate and within an increasingly turbulent environment, characterized by its complexity and uncertainty. What should be done in order to enable the administration to be able to respond positively to such changes and to accelerate the development process is one of the most urgent problems facing the developing countries. Under this heading we are planning a regional seminar in Asia in 1969, and an inter-regional seminar in 1971 or 1972, as well as a comparative study in 1969 on major administrative reforms. We also plan an inter-disciplinary study on administration for change.

3. The development of senior administrators

In view of the rapid changes which have taken place in the 1960's and which will take place in the 1970's, there appears to be an urgent need for the development of senior administrators in the developing countries in addition to the training of civil servants at the lower and medium levels. It is with this in view that an inter-regional seminar was convened in Geneva in August 1968, which will be followed by a number of country projects and by one or more regional seminars.

4. Scientists and technical personnel in the public services

Since economic development implies the application of science and modern technology to production and since the role of government in economic development is expanding in developing countries, the number of scientists and technologists employed by governments will increase. Questions relating to the recruitment, status and career development of scientists and technical personnel in the public service become increasingly important and will constitute major problems for the developing countries in the coming years. The United Nations Public Administration Division is undertaking a study on this subject and plans to convene, in co-operation with UNESCO, an inter-regional seminar on this subject in 1969.

5. Leadership, creativity and motivation

In view of the importance of leadership and action human behaviour problems to successful administration, especially in periods of changes,

the programme of the Public Administration Division includes research in this area to determine what kinds or patterns of leadership and administrative behaviour may enhance the effectiveness of administration and how techniques conducive to obtain such behaviour may be introduced into the administrative system.

6. Use of modern management techniques in public administration

Besides techniques relating to administrative behaviour, there has been rapid progress and significant innovations in the field of management techniques. Many of such techniques (programme budgeting and systems analysis, operations research and system engineering, managerial economics and quantitative techniques, automatic data processing and information systems) may be applicable to the public administration of developing countries. Studies are being undertaken to determine the full potential (including limitations) of these techniques for application to the management of public affairs in the developing countries. The United Nations is planning to hold an inter-regional seminar on this subject in 1970.

7. Administration of individual development functions

Success or failure of overall development very much depends on the success or failure of individual development functions. The United Nations has co-operated with a number of Specialized Agencies and with other substantive offices in the United Nations to work on the administrative aspects of individual government functions such as agriculture, land reform, community development, health, etc. A study in this field has been initiated. There is also the possibility of holding an inter-regional seminar in 1971 or 1972.

8. Special administrative problems of small States

In the last decade many small States have become independent. The Public Administration Division is undertaking a study of the special administrative problems due to "smallness".

9. Administrative aspects of regional (multinational) co-operation and integration

Partly because of the increase in the number of small States and partly because technological advances (especially in transport and in industrial production), there is increasing need for regional (multinational) co-operation and integration. The Central America Institute of Public Administration (ICAP) has been concentrating on the administrative aspects of economic integration of the Central American countries. The Public Administration Section of ECLA is devoting more resources to this question for the whole of Latin America. Not much work has been done by the United Nations on the administrative aspects of economic integration in Africa, except the Special Fund project to assist the Railways and Post Authorities of the East Africa Community.

10. Other problems

Some other urgent problems may be briefly mentioned: the administration and management of public enterprises (especially with respect to the improvement of performance); participation as an instrument and an approach to public administration; the administration of urbanization; as well as the administration of certain urgent special development problems (including family planning, land reform, etc.).

The above list is only to illustrate some of the problems with which the Public Administration Division at Headquarters is dealing, or plans to deal, in the coming years. This is far from a complete list. There are many other urgent and important problems. In particular, many administrative problems encountered in our day-to-day work may have to receive higher priorities. These may include, for example, questions relating to financial control and accounting, tax administration, the organization of central O and M agencies, the question of effective co-operation among the institutes and schools of public administration to develop curriculum, cases and teaching material, question of administration for regional (sub-national) development, questions relating to the provision of basic information necessary for decision making, and many others. These problems should be seriously analysed and should perhaps be assigned higher priority over those listed above. In the future planning of the regional programme in Africa, and also of the inter-regional programme, we would be guided by the deliberations of this important Conference. Furthermore, in formulating our technical co-operation project proposals to individual African countries in the next few years, the ECA Public Administration Section in Addis and the Public Administration Division at Headquarters will be guided by the conclusions reached by you.

In this connexion, I should mention that close relationships exist between the regional programme and the inter-regional programme. We at Headquarters are drawing heavily on the recommendations of the regional seminars and meetings. At the same time we are ready to give maximum support to the regional programme. We are supplementing the regional advisers by inter-regional advisers for country requests which can not be met by regional advisers. Under ECOSOC resolution 1199 (XLII) the Public Administration Division at Headquarters will outpost specialized staff members to the regions at their request to assist the regional programmes on those technical fields in which the regions do not have specialized personnel.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance the Public Administration Division attaches to this Conference. Let me repeat that your recommendations will be fully taken into consideration not only in the formulation of the African regional programme, but also in that of the inter-regional programme as well as African country projects.