

**COUNTRY PAPER FOR THE
11th ASEAN CONFERENCE ON CIVIL SERVICE MATTERS (ACCSM)
HANOI, VIETNAM**

**DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S CIVIL SERVICE
IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION**

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the civil service, being dynamic means being innovative, being able to adjust, being able to make changes and being able to do many other things that can produce action, change or effects. It goes hand in hand and in tandem with sustainable development. Sustainable development refers to the ability of a society, ecosystem or any such on-going system to continue functioning into the indefinite future without being forced into decline through exhaustion of key resources. Sustainable development is the ability to adjust to the changes in the environment in order to sustain the economy or the country. Thus dynamic and sustainable development can be explained as the ability to move forward and make continuous adjustments in response to changes in the environment.

In the present context, globalisation is the current force that shapes the New World order. The rapid growth of modern technology, especially in the area of communication and rapidly emerging information access, has transformed the globe into a mesmerised “blinking world”. The free flows of information, capital, expertise, technology and ideas have made the world smaller and national borders more symbolic rather than physical.

This phenomenon is extensively affecting societies, economies and international relations throughout the whole world. However, globalisation have provided both challenges and opportunities to the world. Challenges in the sense that it can become a threat due to the absence of equal players and the world dividing into economic playing fields where there are winners and disadvantaged players because of uneven power and financial status. On the other hand, globalisation complements development, for example by the advancement of information technology which eases and expedites the flow of capital, goods and services, knowledge and information across national boundaries.

2. CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION TO THE BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S CIVIL SERVICE.

The impact of globalisation has contributed to several challenges to the Brunei Civil Service. The challenges demand both the public and private sectors to refocus their strategic direction and transform the way they

worked and managed. Management tools are no longer exclusively oriented to either the public or the private sector.

Economy

Brunei Darussalam's greatest challenge came from its economy, which is largely dependent on the production of crude oil and liquefied natural gas. Being too dependent on oil and gas and their related industries make Brunei economy vulnerable to exogenous shock and therefore, upgrading and diversifying the economy remain a major task for Brunei Darussalam.

Nation Building

Another challenge is to strengthen and accelerate the process of nation building, and to ensure peace, prosperity and stability prevail in the country. In this regard, the Government of Brunei Darussalam has embarked on development programmes to improve the standard of living and quality of life of its people, as well as strengthen further its economy.

Leadership

The globalisation challenge demands strong, smart, intelligent and capable leadership. This is important because it provides an environment that will inspire and motivate people to be committed in their work as well as to help in managing the organisation, creating a vision of the future, devising a strategy for achieving that vision and communicating the vision to his/her workforce.

Technology

The advent of the digital revolution in the form of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed and changed the business process. This requires a major review of the way things are done such as how the public sector can harness ICT to reach global markets and deliver services in an effective manner. This technological change also demands new skills, changes in mind-set, economic and social policies as well as the shifts in cultural norms. This requires constant revision and needs changes and leverage on the ICT so that the country would not be left behind.

Public High Expectation

The high expectations of the people are challenging the quality, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of public services. This is as a result of increasingly educated citizens who are continuously exposed to outside world and who demand higher standard of services and greater accountability. This requires the civil servants to be more accountable, efficient and effective in the utilisation of resources as well as the delivery of services. In view of this challenge, the civil service needs to be more

responsive, anticipative, innovative and creative in meeting the consumers' needs.

Environmental Issues

Cross border pollution has to some extent contributed to the environmental hazard to this country. The country has experienced the haze arising from forest fires occurring locally and abroad in 1997 and 1998 as well as serious flooding of low areas in 1998 and 1999 had brought about some pollution problems and in the long run may affect the health and quality of life of its citizen.

Financial and Economic Crisis

Another challenge is the experience of Brunei Darussalam during the regional financial and economic crisis in the year 1997/1998. This has slowed down the economy resulting in the scarcity of jobs in the market and the tendency to cut down cost. Since Brunei Darussalam's economy is government driven, the crisis has made the government to be more prudent and stringent in the control of its expenditure. This approach has affected private sector economic activities.

Social Problems

Finally, but not least, the increasing social problems and the increasing number of unemployment amongst the youths have given clear signals that something needs to be done to overcome such problems.

3. BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S CIVIL SERVICE RESPONSE TO GLOBALISATION CHALLENGES

To keep up with such enormous and competitive challenges, the civil service has geared towards transforming itself from its traditional role to a more supportive, facilitative, catalytic and proactive role.

Diversification of Economy

In order to diversify the economy appropriate measures have been developed, such as through the industrialisation programme initiated under the Fifth National Development Plan (1986-1990) and whose emphasis still remains to the present day. The diversification programme is spearheaded by the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources whose function include generating conducive administrative environment for the development of the economy; to encourage the active participation of the local in the development of the economy; to ease and encourage the participation of foreign investors; and to ensure that the development of the economy is in line with the national interest. It is also aimed at developing investment opportunities, creating jobs for the local and producing local products so as

not to be dependent on import. To accommodate this programme, the government has enacted a new legislation to attract investment.

In facilitating and creating a conducive environment for business growth, the government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam has amended the Economic Development Board Act in order to widen its scope in developing industrial sites, promoting investment, developing businesses through equity shares, to co-ordinate and facilitate business establishments. As a statutory body, the board will be autonomous and will have its own funding to function as a government instrument under the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources. The amended and approved Investment Incentives Act will provide better and enhanced investment incentives for investors..

Vision

Having realised the importance of a clear role and direction in the Civil Service, therefore, the government has introduced the *Civil Service Vision – “Civil Service Towards the 21st Century*. The main aims are:-

- i. To provide the strategic direction and focus as well as to gather all efforts which have been and on-going to be done by the Civil Service for the welfare and harmony of its citizen;
- ii. To be used as a reference and guiding foundation for government ministries and departments in planning their programs/activities towards producing an excellent Civil Service; and
- iii. To be used as a platform to accompany all the efforts/ strategies in order to improve the Civil Service administrative and management functions and capability.

The vision focuses on 3 fundamental areas: policy, organisational structure and organisational behaviour, which requires changes in Civil Service to be a facilitator, think tank and catalysts for change. This is needed in facing the challenges and requirement of globalisation as well as the high expectation of the public.

Human Resource Development

Human resource is one of the important assets of a country. As such Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service has given high priority and greater emphasis on the development of its human resources especially in an effort to produce skilled, disciplined, well-educated, motivated and versatile civil servants, who can adapt quickly to a changing environment. This includes developing its professionalism, attitude, knowledge and skills.

In cognisance of those needs, modernised and upgraded education and training systems will continue to be made more responsive to the requirements of dynamic, technically competent and enterprising civil

servants. Hence, provision of better educational facilities and training programmes for the Civil Service, especially in management, professional and technical fields are being actively pursued.

Towards this end, the Civil Service Institute (CSI) of the Prime Minister's Office, in co-operation with various ministries had undertaken and will continue to formulate comprehensive training programmes for the development of skills and the knowledge of civil servants. Apart from CSI, various ministries have also introduced in-house programmes and courses which are intended to improve the quality, performance and productivity of their staff.

Training is also geared towards problem solving techniques. This is not only focused to the management levels but also to the supervisory and junior, as each level is involved in the decision making process and the emphasis is to develop or improve the attitude by inculcating a code of conduct and proper work ethics.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The public sector has already seen the implementation of a number of initiatives to expand the use of ICT in every ministries/departments such as:

- Conducting a regular review of current operating and administrative system, process and procedures gearing towards improvement, modernisation and upgrading services rendered to the public such as, streamlining of systems and procedures, expanding the use of IT in a number of agencies;
- The setting up of the official government web-site to facilitate the retrieval of information on public administration such as, the profiles of ministries and departments as well as services provided by the agencies; and
- Efforts of establishing IT standards and IT procurement.

In the year 2000, millions of dollars have been allocated for the implementation of two Information and Communication Technology (ICT) projects which will be completed in stages by 2001. The two projects consisted of the extension and upgrading of the Brunet system costing about B\$2 million and the provision of computers in the government schools throughout the country costing about B\$11.3 million. Both projects were aimed at inculcating a culture among the young generation to use computers and access to Internets widely to gain useful knowledge towards a knowledge-based society providing the foundation for future manpower development. To enhance and encourage further use of computer by the local youths in the country, initiatives such as the national computer competition (Inforama) and Information Communication Technology camp were also undertaken.

The government has also set up the Brunei Information Technology (BIT) Council in the year 2000 and this is chaired by the Minister of Communication. It acts as a leading entity in driving the national IT Strategic Plan named as the "IT 2000 and Beyond". The task is to lead and facilitate the strategic development and diffusion of the state-of-art IT for the entire nation as well as to help Brunei exploit IT to its full potential for national prosperity, examining the IT needs of the public sector and providing relevant guidance to the private sector.

The plan aims to create a paperless society of Brunei Darussalam by incorporating three major IT drives:

- a. A nation drive toward paperless society (e-Brunei)
- b. Public sector drive towards electronic government (e-Government)
- c. Private sector drive towards electronic business (e-Business)

In its effort to implement the e-Government successfully, the E-Government Executive Committee was set up in early 2001 and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office. Among the roles of the Committee are to drive, co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the e-Government programmes.

Under the E-Government Executive Committee, two working groups were established. They are the Technological Infrastructure Task Force who will evaluate and review the necessary technological infrastructure and the technological improvement programme; and the Organisational Infrastructure Task Force who will evaluate and review areas on policy and finance, strategic human resource management, IT-led HRD, legal, security and procedures.

All these efforts are being implemented in a co-ordinated fashion so as to ensure the public sector is well placed to implement the e-government concept effectively and in turn, support the initiative to keep pace with the digital era. This will involve administrative process re-engineering, thus involving changes in procedures at both ministerial/departmental and inter-ministerial/inter-departmental level.

An allocation of B\$526.0 million or 7.21% from the total development allocation will be provided under the 8th Five year National Development Plan (2001-2005) for the implementation of IT related programmes and projects such as the provision of facilities and infrastructure to establish e-government.

Environment

In response to overcome the environmental issues, environmental protection and conservation continue to be the integral components of the country's development process to ensure sustainable development in line with the long-term objective of maintaining a clean and healthy environment. This includes implementing formulated policies and strategies on environment.

Furthermore, together with the ASEAN countries, a committee on ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment was established with the objectives to facilitate the incorporation of environmental consideration into programmes and activities of ASEAN committees; to monitor the state of ASEAN's natural resources and the quality of the ASEAN environment; to provide ASEAN co-operation on regional environmental matters; and to assist in obtaining financial support for ASEAN activities from within and outside ASEAN.

Economic Recovery

The regional financial and economic crisis has called for government intervention. To address this problem, Brunei Darussalam Economic Council (BDEC) was formed in September 1998 with the objective to examine the economic situation of the country and to recommend short and long term measures designed to revitalise the economy. As a result, the council has outlined several appropriate steps that need to be taken by the government.

In order to enhance the continuity of the economic recovery efforts, the business climate in the country needs to be enhanced. As such, the Department of Economic Planning and Development has been restructured and placed under the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office with an expanded role and responsibility so that changes in the method of national development and its content will be more focused on the national vision and more pragmatic in its implementation process.

Recently, the government of Brunei Darussalam has launched its 8th Five Year National Development Plan (2001-2005), which is the last phase in the implementation of the long-term national development plan started in 1986. The plan in its formulation of strategies, programmes and projects has taken account the various challenges that need to be overcome during current slow economic situation in the Asian region, the advantages of new opportunities such as globalisation, development in ICT, environmental issues, employment and investments.

Social Problems

In an effort to deal with the emergence of worrying social problems that affect the youths in the country, the government of His Majesty had formed a national committee. The new committee is being set up at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports in which the committee is responsible for drawing up action plan to deal with social problems in the country. This includes a plan of action to create greater awareness among the public on their role in dealing with social ills in the country.

The Administrative Improvement Programme

Besides the above programmes, the government is also committed in pursuing continuous improvement programmes/initiatives in the public sector. In this regard, the program called the "*Quality Control Circle (QCC)*"

was introduced in 1984. This initiative is focused on teamwork development and participative decision-making.

The QCC is formed to encourage a group of workers to work together and solve their problems by using problem solving techniques and requires participation of all levels in an organisation. QCC groups that have been formed in the government departments will implement their projects. The best QCC groups will participate in the Brunei National Convention. The winners of the competition will receive prizes made up of cash prizes, trophies as well as certificates of presentation.

Another programme called the *Civil Service Review (CSR) Programme* was introduced in 1990 as an initial effort to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of management in the Civil Service. The programme basically required every ministries and departments to continuously review their organisation in the areas of: organisational structure, systems and procedures, processes, performance and planning of Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service as a whole. This civil service wide program is spearheaded by Civil Service Review Committee chaired by Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office. The objectives of this programme are:

- Assuring clarity of responsibilities, coupled with the authority necessary to discharge the responsibilities;
- Assuring the appropriateness of assigned organisational responsibilities;
- Eliminating overlapping and duplication;
- Facilitating effective direction and performance;
- Development of methods to formulate specific objectives and targets;
- Development of methods to measure organisational performance;
- Improving and simplifying procedures for the routine and regular handling of repetitive, high volume work;
- Redesigning organisational structures, systems, procedures and processes in satisfaction to the aforementioned objectives; and
- Developing a civil service culture and organisational climate which is based on the tradition and principle of Malay Islamic Monarchy and emphasised ideals of service and courtesy so that the word "civil servant" regain their appropriate meaning, denoting one who serves the public willingly, expeditiously and courteously.

To achieve the programme's intended objectives, government ministries and departments are each encouraged to form or appoint "action teams". These action teams mainly consist of senior officials holding key managerial position in the organisation and are headed by the Deputy Directors or

Senior Officers in various ministries and departments. They are the main “catalysts” in bringing about changes and improvements in the performance of their ministries and departments. Their tasks are: to carry out detailed work of analysis; planning for improved performance and review of progress achieved. They need to report at regular intervals directly to the Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Department. The scope of the programme includes:

- An initial review of organisational structure, including identification of and proposals for changes which will streamline and strengthen the exercise of authority and the discharge of responsibilities;
- An initial review of current operating and administrative systems and procedures, with a view toward improvement and modernisation, with special attention to improved utilisation of personnel, introduction of new technologies, more efficient use of resources (human, financial, material and information) and a concurrent increase in effectiveness of performance;
- An intensive review of processes, with detailed reviews of administrative and operating procedures, leading to redesign and simplification where warranted;
- A regular review on Ministry and Department performance in which the actual achievements of each organisation at the end of a given period would be compared with the objectives and targets which had been set; and
- A regular process of planning to improve the organisation’s performance.

In order to enhance the implementation of the CSR Programme, the *Civil Service Excellence Award* was introduced in 1993. The award is primarily aimed at improving performances and increasing productivity as well as quality of the government agencies. It is designed to give recognition and appreciation to ministerial and departmental projects and programmes that have been successfully implemented, in accordance with the merit and ranking decided by the Assessment and Selection Panel. The award was initiated to achieve the objectives outline below:-

- + To assist the Civil Service in achieving the goals and objectives of the administrative reform programs more effectively;
- + To give motivation and recognition to civil servants individually or in groups who have contributed outstandingly towards improving and increasing productivity, quality and performance of their organisations;
- + To facilitate and encourage fair competition among civil servants towards improving and upgrading their management practice and quality service delivery; and
- + To educate and enhance awareness among civil servants about their roles in maintaining high performance, high productivity and high quality of service.

This programme is not only confined to initiatives or projects at the national level but also for individual and team initiatives at ministerial and departmental level.

Client's Charter

To facilitate the high expectation of the people, the government since 1997 introduced the concept of the Client's Charter or "Tekad Pemedulian Orang Ramai" (TPOR). It is basically a written commitment specifying the service to which the customer is entitled; the standard at which it will be provided and the means of redress. As a result, most government departments have taken initiatives to establish their own TPOR. The TPOR is intended to assure customers that the services rendered by the agency will comply with the declared quality standards, in conformance with the expectations and requirements of the customers.

Performance Audit

The use of auditing to evaluate organisational performance is being widely adopted for public sector. It is important in the sense that, it assesses how efficient organisational resources are being utilised, how effective the policies and programmes for managers to achieve their goals.

The introduction of performance audit was done initially by the government through Staff Performance Appraisal in 1993. However, this mechanism is not a complete measurement for assessing the overall performance of the organisation. Therefore, the government in the year 2000 has introduced another mechanism through the *annual report*. The objectives are to assist the government in:

- i. Acknowledging the development, improvement as well as the performance of every ministries and government departments;
- ii. Recognising the improvement and innovation efforts that have been implemented;
- iii. Assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of management and administrative of the ministries and government departments in fulfilling the expectation from the public; and
- iv. Reviewing the efforts that have been done to enable several actions to be taken.

The annual report focus on areas such as:

- Human Resource Management and Development
- Financial Management
- Reform/Improvement Initiatives
- Systems and Procedures
- Organisational Development

- ICT initiatives

Accountability

Despite the existence of standards, regulations and instructions for government officers, the enforcement of some accountability control mechanisms can be rendered less effective due to outdated and vague regulations, and the lengthy sanction procedures. Hence, the government finds it necessary to review these standards, regulations and instructions in order to match the challenges of globalisation.

Another concern relates to an apparent laxity in applying appropriate sanctions against non-compliance with relevant standard, regulations and instructions. To this, the government has called for a stronger accountability in the Civil Service by introducing an improved control mechanism as well as devising effective, punitive and deterrent measures.

As such an Audit Committee was established in October 2000. The functions include to ensure procedures and the management of government financial and properties as outline in the 1983 financial regulations are observed; to ensure department's head and financial officer are accountable in their management of government expenditure; to ensure value for money; and the committee as and when required will call upon any officers to give evidence on the matters pertaining to their jobs under the term called exit meeting.

Privatisation

Most of the country's economic and physical developments were government generated. This has put so much strain in the government's resources. As for this reason, the government has been making efforts to transfer some of its activities and functions to private entities and corporate agencies.

The Special Privatisation committee was formed in 1994 to study and implement privatisation project submitted by ministries and departments. The committee is currently chaired by a Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, with the Department of Economic Planning and Development acting as its secretariat. With the implementation of privatisation, it was hoped that the government would be able to reduce the size of the civil services, optimised government expenditure, relieved the government from administrative burdens and at the same time improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the services.

The need for privatisation was further intensified in the Brunei Darussalam Economic Council's report. In this report, the council suggested that the government should:

1. Complete master-plan for corporatisation and privatisation using expert advice to ensure that the corporatisation and privatisation process is in line with international best practices;
2. Identify one major candidate for corporatisation and/or privatisation within 12 months and commence with immediate implementation;
3. Establish regulatory and other safeguards for transparent process and competitive market driven outcomes; and
4. Contract out non-core services within government to the private sector – particularly to the local Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs).

All privatisation proposals initiated by either the department concerned or by the Department of Economic Planning and Development must go through the Special Privatisation Committee, who will then forward it to the cabinet for approval. To date, several government functions and services have been privatised either through corporatisation, contracting out, leasing, supplies, licensing and franchising.

In the new 8th Five Year National Development Plan (the last phase of the Sultanate's 20 year national development programme), the government has earmarked B\$7.3 billions in funding, of which about 60% would likely be sourced from the private sector. The National Development Plan provides the private sector the opportunity not just to participate but to invest in the national development through private financing initiatives (project funding), foreign direct investment, venture capital and others. With this arrangement, the government is shedding off its traditional role of funding and administering national development programmes on its own. This will make the private sector a real engine to power the nation building progress in the next five years.

4. CONCLUSION

The Civil Service of Brunei Darussalam is well aware of the enormous challenges it is facing in the era of globalisation. Although various efforts have been undertaken in response to these challenges, it will never be complacent since changes is never static and new problems and challenges will continue to emerge; and the civil service must learn and be prepared positively and proactively. Therefore, it is essential for the civil service to be continuously dynamic, creative, innovative and responsive in meeting the new challenges in order to sustain the country's economic development, social and political stability as well as maintaining its competitive advantages.

Moreover, Brunei Darussalam sees itself developing a more sophisticated economy using the considerable resources it has built up as a platform for growth. It sees itself continuing to play an important role with its neighbours in ASEAN and furthermore developing wider diplomatic contacts by aligning

its role among community of nations for regional and global peace, progress and stability in the era of globalisation.