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**COUNTRY PAPER OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM INITIATIVES TOWARD
DEVELOPING A CORPORATE CULTURE IN ITS
PUBLIC SERVICE**

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**BRUNEI INITIATIVES TOWARDS ENHANCING
A CORPORATE CULTURE IN ITS
PUBLIC SERVICE ”
(Current Corporate Aspects Within
Brunei Darussalam’s Public Service)**

Introduction

The current and future global situation is getting more competitive, borderless, sophisticated and complex and the advent of communication technology bringing on the ICT explosion are affecting our ways of thinking, working, managing and interacting with each other. The process of globalization, complemented by the advancement of information technology, has eased and expedited the flow of capital knowledge and information across national boundaries. This development requires every country to be wary of increased customer demands and expectations, thus requiring a constant review of its competitive functions and modes of operation. Such social changes challenge the quality, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and integrity of public services.

Such globalization thus requires the Brunei Civil Service to be in tandem with the changes by enhancing and equipping people within it with the appropriate skills, knowledge and competencies. Brunei civil servants at all levels need to carry out their entrusted responsibility with more commitment, dedication and greater efficiency now more than ever. Civil Services are now held increasingly accountable for the efficient and effective utilization of resources as well as the delivery of services. In view of this challenge, civil services need to be responsive and must learn to anticipate demands as well as have the ability to meet the needs of consumers and their expectations in a more innovative and creative manner. For Brunei Darussalam, in facing all these changes and the turbulent global trends, efforts to better manage and modernize the government are necessary to make its Civil Service more resilient, dynamic and relevant.

Overview of the Brunei Civil Service

(3) The current Brunei Civil Service population stands at 44,031 as of 4th August 2007, of which approximately 52% are men and 48% are women. The Brunei Government remains the main employer in the country, employing 12.23% of Brunei's total population (approx. 370,000). The Civil Service is divided into 5 divisions with the first division for directors and managerial staff including permanent secretaries, the second division for executives, the third division for supervisory and skilled technical staff and the fourth and fifth divisions for support staff.

(4) Currently, there are 12 ministries and 113 departments in the Brunei Civil Service. The large number of civil service staff reflects the government's efforts in taking care of the wellbeing and welfare of the people through its extensive economic, social, education, health, religious, administrative and development programs and projects.

Since 1990, various administrative and management improvement programs have been introduced into the Civil Service, signifying the commitment of His Majesty the Sultan's Government to bring about a paradigm shift and mindset changes in the system of management and work culture towards creating a more transparent, dynamic, responsive, accountable, effective and efficient civil service. In the spirit of continuous improvement, His Majesty's Government has never faltered from stressing the need to inculcate excellent work ethics, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative and management entity, to upgrade the skill and competency of officers and staff and to enhance the quality of service delivery towards customer satisfaction.

(4) Alongside efforts in administrative and management improvements, the Brunei Civil Service itself is administered by aspects which affect the internal sentiments and conduct of the establishment. First and foremost, the Civil Service is led by a **National Aspiration** which sustains the drive, motivation and commitment of its members to a unified goal of national peace, prosperity and development. This national aspiration forms the main umbrella under which other more specific goals such as the Civil Service Vision of the 21st Century exist.

The National Aspiration arises from the many policy directives conveyed through the speeches of His Majesty the Sultan. As His Majesty has repeatedly stressed, quality service delivery, efficient, effective and responsive public services and the importance of customer focus and customer satisfaction to the integrity of government are all very important. An efficient and effective Civil Service becomes the central government machinery that is expected to bring about national development through smooth administrative progress and policy implementation.

(5) Brunei Darussalam's Independence Proclamation on 1st January 1984 as proclaimed by His Majesty the Sultan sums up the National Aspiration as follows:-

“Negara Brunei Darussalam, by Allah’s Will, shall forever remain an independent, sovereign and democratic Malay Muslim Monarchy in accordance with the Islamic teachings of Ahli Sunnah Wal-Jamaah and based on the principles of justice, truth and freedom and God’s Guidance shall continuously strive to achieve peace and security, well-being and happiness for the people of Negara Brunei Darussalam”.

(6) In specifically addressing the Civil Service, His Majesty's Government launched its Civil Service Vision of the 21st Century which aims ***‘To make the Civil Service of Brunei Darussalam an organization that promotes continuous development and continuously strives for excellence in its own way in accordance with Islamic principles and in a healthy and safe environment with the blessing and guidance of Allah the Almighty’***. This is the shared vision and the clear, collective goal that will enable Brunei's Civil Service to undertake future challenges competently, positively, effectively and confidently as the central machinery of government.

This vision emphasizes that the Brunei Civil Service will not remain static and that it will continue to develop in accordance with abilities and capabilities based on Islamic principles within the peaceful environment this country has provided for many years. Here too, Islam encourages progress and this we hope to achieve with the blessing and consent of Allah the Almighty.

Thus, in view of the unpredictable future and the effects of globalization that require Brunei's Civil Service to be adaptable and dynamic, the Civil Service Vision of the 21st Century provides a platform to shape and equip it with the strength and competitiveness to compete in fields beneficial to itself and to allow it to maintain levels of economic development in line with other countries. Its role, therefore, becomes more extensive as facilitator as well as pioneer in handling those expected future changes.

(7) The Civil Service Moral Pillars and Work Ethics govern Civil Service behaviour and attitudes required to bring about an honourable and respectable Civil Service. The eleven criteria based on universal Islamic values are considered ideal towards establishing an efficient, effective, clean and trustworthy Civil Service. Thus, apart from being well-trained and knowledgeable, civil servants need to be disciplined in performing their duty to the public. This is because good work ethics normally produce quality service. These values are undoubtedly crucial in projecting the good image of the Civil Service as a whole. For this reason, strategic measures have been intensified through training, seminars, publications and speeches by key government officials to inculcate positive attitudes and progressive values civil service-wide.

Inculcating the values contained in the Moral Pillars and Work Ethics of the Civil Service are essential towards creating a culture of excellence with the correct mindset and attitude that is cohesively welded together by shared values rather than bound to conformity by regulation and the standardization of terms and conditions. The eleven values are:-

- Clean, honest and trustworthy;
- Efficient, expeditious and accurate;
- Meticulous and valuing timeliness;
- Knowledgeable, creative and innovative;
- Commitment, openness and accountability;
- Tolerance, perseverance and courteous;
- Productive and competitive;
- Exemplary / austere; and
- Solidarity, consultation and participatory.

Dissemination of these work ethics and values to all civil servants is done through seminars, training and road-shows held at government ministries and departments. In these ways, civil servants are able to know, understand and become aware of those values expected of their professional conduct.

(8) The Brunei Civil Service also provides for conformity of civil service conduct through regulation and standardization of terms and conditions as set out in the **Public Service Commission Act, General Orders and Service Regulations of 1961, Prime Minister's Office and Treasury Circulars as well as Financial Regulations**. The Public Service Commission Act deals with two main frameworks of civil service regulations namely basic work regulations and disciplinary action. Basic work regulations describe basic working hours, working attire, entitlements and so on whilst disciplinary action covers those actions that can be taken against a civil servant who commits an offence listed in those regulations such as absence from work without leave, leaving the country without official permission, drug offences and so on. These frameworks also exist as the main reference for all civil servants regarding all service regulations within government.

Financial Regulations, which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance, deal with aspects of proper financial procedures and regulations that must be followed and obeyed by all civil servants relating to government budgets, government expenditure, store-keeping and so on.

Complementarily, inculcating a corporate culture into the Brunei Civil Service further equips the government, and ultimately the civil servants within it, with additional logistics and a clearer direction towards achieving the civil service of the future that the country aspires to.

(9) **Brunei Civil Service Initiatives Towards Developing A Corporate Culture : A Two-Pronged Approach – Human Resource Initiatives and Service Delivery Initiatives**

(10) **Human Resource Initiatives**

Brunei Darussalam has embarked on Human Resource (HR) Initiatives as part of its efforts to develop a corporate culture in its Civil Service. These HR initiatives include Human Resource Management that covers **training programs** as well as selective recruitment in hiring competent staff to fill in correct posts suited to specific skills and capabilities. It also includes **Participatory Management** through Good Governance criteria such as accountability and transparency as well as the exercise of management concepts such as Quality Control Circles (QCCs or KKC as they are known in Brunei), Civil Service Excellence Awards (CSEA) and Staff Suggestion Schemes (SSS). Through these concepts, suggestions for improvements in management are initiated from employees and reflects bottom-up management. Another HR initiative is **Civil Service Counseling** which provides a strategic support system for the welfare of civil servants and enables the Civil Service to maintain and sustain wellness and well-being amongst all employees.

(11) **Human Resource Development** or HRD is an HRM initiative in the Brunei Civil Service and covers all **in-service training** done in local and overseas educational institutions. Brunei civil servants are eligible to apply for in-service training as specified by their service schemes for Bachelor degrees, Post-Graduate diplomas, certificates, Masters degrees and Doctorates. Human Resource Development in the civil service has received much support from the government due to the importance of the workforce quality in the face of future challenges. Thus the government has allocated a specified budget for human resource development focusing on professional in-service training held overseas. The Public Service Department, through its Staffing and Training Administration Division, processes in-service training applications where last year, restrictions on quotas for in-service training for each ministry were lifted, thus demonstrating the government's desire and commitment to promote civil service capacity-building to the maximum.

Human resource is an important asset of a country. As such, Brunei Darussalam's Civil Service has given high priority and great emphasis on the development of its human resources especially in its efforts to produce skilled, discipline, well-educated, highly-knowledgeable, motivated, capable and versatile civil servants who can adapt quickly to changing environments and demands. These efforts include developing its

professionalism, leadership skills, attitude, knowledge and skills to fulfill national aspirations towards efficient service delivery and service excellence.

The Brunei Civil Service is aware of the importance of **leadership** and has embarked on programs to build up and improve leadership skills through various development programs such as the Advanced Development Program, Executive Development Program for Senior Government Officers (EDPSGO) and the Development Program for Middle Management Government Officers (DPMMGO). The Public Service Department under the Prime Minister's Office has been mandated to organize the Annual Executive Development Program for Senior Government Officers since 1996. The EDP is geared to shorten the learning curve for upper level executives by developing the skills needed to achieve excellence as a cross-functional executive. Participants have been provided with an overview of key managerial disciplines, including strategy and decision-making, public policy imperative and cross-cultural management. The program also demonstrates how to maximize people and resources, develop a broad understanding of integration across functions and make accurate projections to enhance one's organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage. This program is mandatory for administrative officers to attend in order to be confirmed as Heads of Departments.

The department also organizes the Development Program for Government Middle Management Officers which aims to enhance participants with managerial knowledge and skills in order to manage changes and demands of public administration brought on by globalization and regional trends.

The Public Service Department is also responsible for the Advanced Development Program for senior officers in Superscale C, B and A in Division One, categorically Directors and above, often described as the second echelon who are eligible to take over the administrative roles of permanent secretaries. It is therefore essential to continuously develop them with not just new management methods and leadership skills but also with the awareness of regional and global development.

The Brunei Civil Service not only equips the higher echelons of administration with skills to bring the country forward but is also committed to **professionalizing civil servants via Civil Service examinations** in the General Orders and Financial Regulations

subjects held twice a year in June and December. These examinations, open to B3, B2EB3 and B2 administrative officers who are the executive division in government, are also held complete with briefings on both subjects by the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service Department. This is to ensure that all officers are given equal opportunity to sit for the exams with an equal chance to succeed and also provides an opportunity for all officers to familiarise themselves with basic service and financial regulations in Brunei public administration.

Brunei civil servants also subscribe to the **Minimum 100-Hours Training Program** which requires them to train for at least 100 hours a year in efforts to upgrade, improve and increase their skills and knowledge. This training program is directed to all civil servants including support staff in Divisions 4 and 5 where improvement in civil servants' knowledge and skills will eventually upgrade the overall work quality of the civil service in the long run. Training is coordinated by their individual ministries with relevant training institutions like the Civil Service Institute (CSI) and so on.

In strategic capacity-building, the Brunei Civil Service has remained in tandem with training the required skills needed to bring the country forward in specific fields such as information technology (IT), counseling, risk management and so on. Thus, in training **skills-specific human resources**, the country will have the correct people needed to handle specific challenges brought on by globalization and regional trends.

(12) **Human Resource Management**

Human Resource Management initiatives include the **Performance Appraisal System** in the Brunei Civil Service that is currently tied to Annual Bonuses awarded every December. It also has bearing on other aspects of employee affairs such as promotions, post confirmations as well as Service Medals and State Decorations Awards recommendations. This initiative forms part of the rewards/incentives/motivation aspects within the civil service where the capabilities of civil servants are continuously and regularly evaluated every year to monitor individual performance, progress and capabilities and to provide them with incentives to improve and develop further in performing their tasks.

Apart from the Performance Appraisal System, the Brunei Civil Service also has provisions for all civil servants in the form of a variety of **government benefits** such as the Subsistence Allowance added on to basic civil service salaries, passage allowances which consist of three-yearly passage allowances as well as a ten-yearly passage allowance to London and a fifteen-yearly passage allowance to perform the Hal pilgrimage to Mecca. Indeed, civil servants can also apply for education allowances for a maximum number of four children in specified ages, housing loans to build their own homes and car loans that are all interest-free with repayments spread out over four years as well as many other government benefits. These benefits serve as incentives to further motivate Brunei Civil Servants to keep performing their best as they are well provided for by the Government of His Majesty.

(13) **Civil Service Counseling**

Counseling Services is now considered a strategic partner of Brunei's Civil Service due to its role in creating wellness and well-being in the establishment. Counseling now forms the support system to the Civil Service that enables improvement and enrichment of its human resource quality. Not only does counseling remedy work ethic problems and negative work attitudes but it also acts as a preventive measure disseminated to all newly-recruited civil servants through induction courses held at the beginning of their service.

The establishment of a Counseling Services Unit under the Public Service Department on 5th August 2004 by the consent of His Majesty the Sultan demonstrates the government's continuous and serious efforts towards increasing the level of public services, especially among civil servants, by increasing productivity, awareness and commitment towards tasks and responsibilities as well as career development.

The foundations of success and national development planning rely heavily on the capability and effectiveness of the public sector to bear all responsibilities while ensuring civil servants possess dedication, discipline and a high level of commitment. Weaknesses at the micro-level such as 'deadwood', lack of commitment and dedication,

and disciplinary problems must be tackled promptly and systematically through a counseling system before they affect the engine of Public Service administration.

The Brunei Government considers its civil servants as assets to the nation and that they should be given a chance through guidance to carry out their roles more effectively. Thus, even though traditionally counseling played a supporting role to public services, it has presently become a strategic partner and an important component of human resource management.

Service Delivery Initiatives

(14) This second approach arises from many of His Majesty the Sultan's 'Titahs' on service delivery, amongst them in 2002 as stated below:-

“.....Government has introduced many strategies, programs and systems as reforms and efforts to improve administration and management.....include the Client Charter, the Work Procedure Manual.....to enable a Civil Service with vision and direction, as well as make it more efficient, productive, systematic, caring and trustworthy”.

(15) His Majesty has continuously stressed the importance of a performing Civil Service that is able to fulfill rising customer demands and expectations through efforts and improvements to management and administration. A capable Civil Service in these respects would strengthen its integrity as the central administrative machinery responsible for bringing about peace, prosperity and welfare for the Brunei people.

(16) Amongst the initiatives that have been developed aside from top leadership policy direction from His Majesty the Sultan emphasizing an image of a caring and competent government include the Prime Minister's Office **Strategic Planning Theme on 'Modernising the Civil Service'** to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, the setting up of the Civil Service Review Committee, the Steering Committee on Service Delivery To The Public and Customer-Focused Services.

(17) Via **National Strategic Planning and Alignment** with all government agencies, efforts have been made towards realising the national aspiration as a target to be reached collectively. Although each of the twelve ministries in government have developed their own Strategic Plan, however, their plans are aligned to national aspirations and improved coordination between all government agencies are designed to bring about administrative process efficiency towards policy effectiveness and better service delivery. This is the ultimate goal of modernizing government to improve its capability to function more efficiently, to serve more effectively and to be customer-focused in all transactions and service provision.

(18) **Civil Service Review Committee**

The **Civil Service Review Committee** is responsible for the constant review of competency, quality and management performance in the Civil Service. It focuses on the workings of systems and procedures as well as process and service delivery and seeks improvements aimed at expediting service delivery which ultimately increases customer satisfaction.

Such efforts provide an opportunity for the Government to practice continuous improvements in its administration and management techniques while adapting itself to constructive change according to what it required by current circumstances.

(19) **Steering Committee on Service Delivery To The Public**

The setting up of this **Steering Committee** in February this year demonstrates the seriousness of the Brunei Government in improving service delivery and excellence of service quality. The committee is responsible for improving the quality and timeliness of services provided to the public, especially in light of public dissatisfaction that is frequently voiced out regarding the quality of public service provision.

It also ensures greater transparency of service delivery to the public in terms of process and information, thus fulfilling the criteria of 'good governance' simultaneously. With greater transparency comes greater coordination as all information becomes available and relevant agencies are able to act on that information freely to produce better service

delivery. Better and greater coordination also produces more efficient, effective and quicker service delivery, especially when certain processes require coordination and processing between various ministries. Such processes include Business License applications which require coordination between the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Occupancy Permit applications which involve the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Development among others.

The private sector has a major role to play within Brunei Darussalam's national economy and when government is seen to be efficient and effective, this will encourage **higher commitment from the private sector** to continue contributing its part to national development and prosperity.

(20) **Customer Focus**

Meeting customer needs has now become a focal point of all civil service operations which is a clear departure from a rule-bound bureaucratic tradition. As such, there is a conscious move or effort to understand the needs of customers and to continuously upgrade service standards to not only meet customer expectations but also to exceed those expectations by delighting the customer.

From the launching of a nation-wide courtesy campaign in 1990 to the more recent setting up of a Steering Committee on Service Delivery to the Public, much has been done to educate civil servants about the importance and justification of service excellence. Management tools have also been introduced into the civil service such as the **Client Charter** which is essentially a written pledge to customers on the length of expected service to clients. It is a declaration of the written commitment of the department specifying the service to which the customer is entitled and the standard at which it will be provided which is exhibited to the public with means of redress for unsatisfactory service. This provision of transparent services to the customers ensures that Government agencies remain sensitive and responsive to meeting their customers' needs and expectations.

As government agencies become more sensitive to the public and their ability to provide feedback on service delivery, many government departments have adopted proactive

approaches by introducing further mechanisms such as Customer Service Units, Suggestion Boxes, Customer Feedback Forms, Hotlines, Staff Suggestion Schemes and so on to gather feedback as well as disseminate information to the public in efforts to improve service delivery and to satisfy their customers. This comes with the realization that public satisfaction with service delivery and service provision strengthens the integrity of the Brunei Civil Service and the Brunei Government as guardian and provider for the welfare of the Brunei people.

(21) **Conclusion**

The establishment of a clear and well-defined vision is essential in providing focus and direction to current program and policy formulation to meet future challenges and to remain relevant in capabilities. With a National Aspiration and Strategic Planning focusing on structures, systems and human behaviour aligned to that target, efforts are clearly ongoing to achieve quality and excellence in the Brunei Civil Service characterized by increased efficiency, responsiveness, innovativeness, capability and accountability. This will further equip the Brunei Civil Service with the ability to adapt to complex internal and external environments, the effects of the global information explosion, unpredictable new opportunities and fast global changes.

A corporate culture as espoused by the initiatives introduced into the Brunei Civil Service will further help to nurture an attitude of service excellence amongst civil servants and foster an environment which welcomes change as a superior and NECESSARY way of life. With changing times, and a civil service enabled with the relevant and necessary capabilities, the integrity of the Brunei Civil Service is confidently maintained and strengthened. This will eventually give way to the establishment of a highly-reputed Civil Service, aspiring to administrative excellence and leading to further prosperity and national development.

(22) **Striving Towards Excellence**

Thus the existence of a corporate culture in Brunei's Civil Service is expected to lead to excellent and efficient service delivery focusing on customer satisfaction. With all government efforts to build up capacity and capability in human resources, thus the

Brunei people will be served by an accountable civil service that not only knows what customer demands are but is better able to satisfy those demands. Such a vision of a competent and caring government has been the priority of a strategic leadership that has given way to clear policy direction and directives as well as put into place the necessary structural systems required to support the implementation of Brunei public policies efficiently and effectively.

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