

STATE BUILDING AT THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT



COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION (GIDD)

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by

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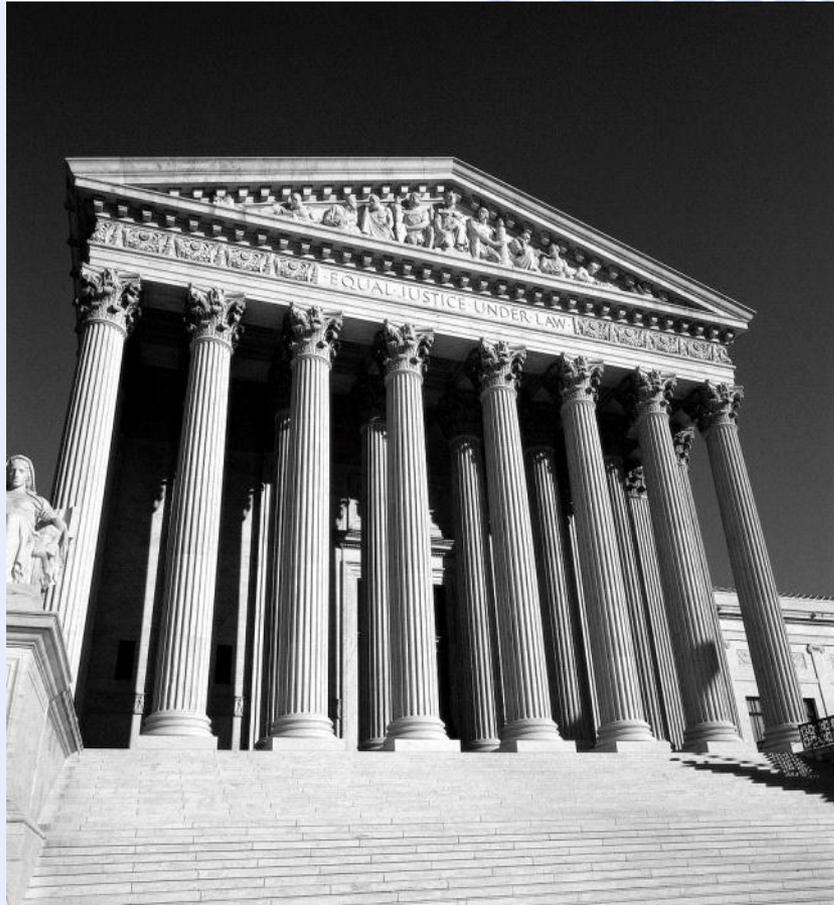
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STATE BUILDING AT THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

- **The public sector** is key to the creation of an enabling environment for development and economic competitiveness.
- **We have found that without strengthening the Centre of Government** neither development, economic competitiveness nor public sector reforms can take place.

State building at the centre of Government cont'd



- Therefore the Commonwealth Secretariat is working to strengthen:
 - **The Political-Administrative Interface**
 - **The Cabinet Office**
 - **The Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of Public Services (one person performs both functions in most States).**

State building at the centre of Government cont'd

- The Presentation will be divided into two parts
 - The Caribbean Region by Dr. Joan Nwasike
 - The Africa Region by Mr. Dunstan Maina

State building at the centre of Government –The Caribbean Region



State Building at the Centre of Government cont'd

- **How we do this?**
 - **By facilitating High level Retreats for Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries:**
 - To highlight the critical importance of developing a positive relationship at the political and administrative interface so as to create an enabling environment for good governance and high performance. Both of these elements contribute to the socio-economic development of countries and the achievement of the MDGs.

State Building at the Centre of Government cont'd

Facilitating High level Retreats for Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries cont'd

- to clarify roles and responsibilities of the political and administrative bureaucracies
- To build trusting and collaborative relationships
- To determine ways to improve portfolio coordination
- To embed the importance of collective responsibility.

State building at the centre of Government –The Caribbean Region

- **The Commonwealth Secretariat has facilitated these retreats at the request of Governments in the Caribbean Region:**
 - One intervention in Belize in 2007
 - Two interventions of St. Lucia in 2008 and 2010
 - Two interventions in Grenada in 2009 and 2010
 - One intervention in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in March 2011

State building at the centre of Government –The Caribbean Region

- **The Facilitators for these High Level Retreats include:**

- Former Prime Ministers
- Former Ministers
- Former Cabinet Secretaries
- Former Secretary of the Privy Council of Canada
- Director and Advisers from GIDD
- CFTC Experts at the CARICOM Secretariat

State Building at the Centre of Government

- Design and structure of the Retreats
 - The Retreats are designed and structured for the duration of one week.
 - two days for the Cabinet
 - two days for Permanent Secretaries
 - one day for the combined group to address issues related to portfolio coordination and the bill processes.

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- The Cabinet Office
 - Work Study programmes to Jamaica Cabinet's Office
 - Through CFTC short-term consultancy on restructuring of Cabinet Offices and coaching for new Cabinet Secretaries
 - Placement of CFTC long-term Public Policy experts

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- Annual Commonwealth Caribbean Cabinet Secretaries and Heads of Public Services (HOPS) consultative meetings:
 - Discussion on the key and strategic role the Cabinet Secretary and HOPS should play in the operation and monitoring of Government business
 - Enhancement of Leadership skills for institutional reform, revision and consolidation
 - Encourage Cabinet Secretaries and HOPS to take steps to create institutional reform (reform of rules, laws , procedures and practices governing the functions of the public service

State building at the centre of Government –The Caribbean Region

- **Progress so far:**
 - As a result of GIDD's intervention, there has been some improvement in the governance and management processes at the executive and administrative levels in all of the four countries.
 - There has been an improvement in relationships at the political-administrative levels due to the clarification of roles and responsibilities.
 -
 - Developed a Handbook for Cabinet Secretaries by the Commonwealth Secretariat

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Progress so far cont'd:

- Leveraging on GIDD's work a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit by the World Bank (WB) in the Cabinet office with Officers trained by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
- The formalization of Senior Managers Boards, consisting of all Permanent Secretaries, Directors, and Managers of statutory government establishments and chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. This Board is intended among others, to enhance policy development and coordination across Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

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Progress so far cont'd:

- The appointment of the Cabinet Secretary as Head of the Public Service which is important as it leads to better coordination of the public sector reform programme.
- The development of a Code of Good Practice for members of the Senior Managers Board. This is important because it is the first of its kind and embed and support the principles and values discussed at the Retreats.

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Progress so far cont'd

- Cabinet Ministers and Permanent Secretaries now understand of their roles and responsibilities with greater clarity.
- The process of strengthening the Cabinet Offices in have commenced with the commissioning of an Expert, to work along with the Cabinet Secretary on streamlining the processes for cabinet submissions and the general structure of the Cabinet Office (south-south cooperation).

State building at the centre of Government —The Caribbean Region

- The Continued Challenges:
 - The politicization of the public service. We are thinking of new initiatives to manage this process and ensure that public servants execute their duties impartially.
 - The challenge of professional capacity within the public service.
 - The fiscal constraints of countries

State building at the centre of Government —The Caribbean Region

- Next Steps:
 - We believe that for development to be successful, it is important to include the parliamentary opposition in our capacity enhancement programmes on Governance and Development.
 - The first programme on Governance and Development is planned for the Parliamentary Opposition in St. Vincent and the Grenadines on the 28th and 29th July 2011.

State building at the centre of Government

- **The Commonwealth Secretariat** is strategically placed to carry out this politically sensitive work because of the trust placed by countries in the Secretariat as a development partner working in the interests of their national development goals.

State building at the centre of Government –The Africa Region



State building at the centre of Government –The Africa Region,

Historical background

- During the colonial period, the most governments were led by civil servants who formulated and implemented policies under the broad guidance of the governor and his council of advisors.
- In many countries, this changed after independence with politicians feeling that they had the people's mandate to govern but the civil servants had the skills and expertise - power relations!

State building at the centre of Government –The Africa Region,

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- Traditionally, civil servants are expected to accept their seemingly inferior position in government in return for a secure career, opportunities to shape policies, and protection against personal blame for policy failures
- However, relationship between politicians and civil servants especially in Africa is characterized by mutual suspicion and occasional conflict. No trust and teamwork largely due to misinterpretation/disregard of roles and responsibilities.
- Civil servants feel that their professional advice is sometimes not heeded while politicians feel that technocrats undermine them with their sluggish, bureaucratic performance and disloyalty.

Causes of the poor relationship between politicians and technocrats

1. Civil servants regard themselves as the permanent staff with longer term view and goals and see politicians as the temporary members who want just to accomplish a lot of tasks during their short term of office. These two viewpoints clash when determining programmes and how they are to be implemented.
2. Politicians always try to circumvent rules and regulations pertaining to financial resources eg procurement especially lucrative contracts **not always for corrupt reasons** but political expediency issues and the short term nature of their tenure.
3. Politicians argue they have the mandate to govern and meet the needs of the electorate – add in the high expectations based on the countless campaign promises, and public perception of leaders.
4. Furthermore, politicians need to recoup the resources they invested in campaigns. Ultimately, it no longer matters whose role it is to formulate policy and whose it is to implement it - but what one can get from the public office – **time to eat!** - true for both sides.

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5. Opposition: Government has no time for the opposition. Civil servants completely shut out opposition politicians. Civil servants from opposition strongholds have sometimes lost their jobs.

They should not be seen in the company of “anti-government elements” so no appointments even to discuss official government business. Three sworn enemies of the states – the opposition, the media and civil society - in that order.

6. Ethnicity: Some ministers openly prefer to work with permanent secretaries and senior staff from their ethnic groups. Some PSs have been transferred and even dropped due to this reason depending on how powerful the Ministers are.

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7. Role conflicts: conflictive perception of what their respective political and administrative powers in the ministry for Ministers and PSs. Ministers are ultimately accountable to parliament hence consider themselves as de facto ministerial heads yet by law PSs have the authority to control all financial, human and other material resources of the ministry – are the actual chief administrators or managers of the ministries. (PBB, RBM, performance contracts)
8. Politicization: relationship issues cannot be discussed in isolation from the operational issues especially forms of administration, its degree of meritocracy, the neutrality and autonomy of its civil servants, and mechanisms for policy-making and coordination and for coherent programme implementation. Many countries simply have too many unwieldy administrative structures that obstruct development and effective governance. Civil service has become increasingly politicized even at level of service delivery. This has become a source of conflict too. Eg public services denied to opposition strongholds, Ministers from

Effects of this poor relationship

- Poor service delivery due to weak performance and low productivity. Conflict undermines efficiency
- Misuse and wastage of government resources from corruption, sheer apathy and laxity.
- Poor policy formulation and implementation due to poor leadership and lack of direction
- Demotivated staff - low morale

Recommendations:



Recommendations:

- Regular consultative meetings through which politicians and technocrats can exchange share views and ideas about the management of government business. - similar to COMSEC ones
- Staff at all levels should be sensitized about the need for cooperation and consensus building in matters affecting the operation of the ministry.
- Both the PSs and ministers and other senior staff should be accessible to members of the public to get feedback on performance and any useful information and ideas on areas for improvement.
- Linkage with think tanks, policy research institutions and exposure to better performing civil services
- Induction programmes for all newly appointed permanent secretaries and ministers and development of handbooks/manuals.
- Introduction of leadership development programmes
- Greater focus on performance and results

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- Professionalization in recruitment, appointments and promotions. Adoption of meritocracy
- Civic education: electorate need to be made aware of their rights, obligations and responsibilities vis-à-vis the civil servants and politicians.
- Need for a stronger accountability framework that revolves around the public – further, partnership with key actors including the media and civil society for synergy and accountability is critical.
- Regular media briefings
- Relationship between civil servants and Ministers should be one of mutual interdependence ie Ministers providing authority with officials providing expertise. Politicians ought to work as sovereign representatives of political values and interests; and bureaucrats as subordinate policy executors, whose major concern is efficiency. Complementarity – both sides need each other.
- Better and clear conflict resolution mechanisms –HoPS?

Conclusion

- This is a politically sensitive area to work in and that is where COMSEC's comparative advantages become so crucial. The issue of trust and confidentiality are important to member states.
- Issues discussed are often confidential and therefore such requests mainly come through the top leadership ie Presidents, Prime Ministers. Political commitment and ownership is critical in this process.
- Ultimate decision to change lies with Governments. COMSEC role is limited to advising and recommending some good practices based on Commonwealth experience.

Thank You !

