

**Wyndham City Centre Hotel
Washington D.C.
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Carlton E Davis, Cabinet Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to be invited to this Conference. First of all, to receive an Award named after my dear departed good friend and outstanding international public servant, Mr Jit Gill, who did so much to facilitate the process of transformation in Jamaica; Second, to be able to be a part of panel discussions and other presentations by a number of persons from various parts of the world, who have served at the political, administrative and technical levels in the areas of governance; And, last but not least, to be asked to address this luncheon on : **A Practitioner's Perspective of Governance.**

I should like to begin by looking briefly at what we understand by the term 'governance'. Despite everyone knowing more-or-less what we are talking about, it is useful to be as precise as possible when we use the term.

I have come upon three definitions which I will cite quickly.

1. **The World Bank** defined the term as: - "The manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development".
2. **The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** sees "good governance" as: - The exercise of power by various levels of government in a manner that is effective, honest, equitable, transparent and accountable.
3. A speaker at a Governance Conference in Ottawa in May 2001 ⁽¹⁾ defines it as:
 - "The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good and incorporates:
 - (a) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced; and
 - (b) the capacity of the government to manage its resources and implement sound policies".

In sum, all three see governance as incorporating how resources are managed for social and economic development; and, implicitly or explicitly, distinguishes good and bad governance on the basis of whether this is done in an effective, honest, transparent, equitable and accountable way. It is noted that the last definition I cited goes beyond these to include the process by which the 'governors' are selected, monitored and replaced).

(1) Philippe Faucher, University of Montreal: Conference on Changing Governance and Public Sector Reforms in the Americas, Ottawa, Canada, May 1, 2001

Like a great many other countries, Jamaica has long recognized that an efficient Public Service is important to the development of the country; and, in recognition of this, there has been a surfeit of studies on how it could be improved - no less than twenty-one reports between the 1940s and the 1980s dealing with some aspects of public sector reform or the other. ⁽²⁾

(2). Administrative Reform Enquiries in Jamaica 1942-1980 Margaret Priestley, Vol.II Synopsis of Reports, Cabinet Office Library, Jamaica

There was, for example, one in the 1940s written by a **Commission on the Public Service** making sixty-five general recommendations relating to salaries, cost-of-living allowances, war bonuses, and administrative problems relating to a 1944 Constitution which , among other things, provided for Universal Adult Suffrage; one in the 1950s by a **Working Party on Staffing and Salary Gradings**; in the 1960s , a UN Report on Public Administration in Jamaica, inter alia, to, recommend ways and means of

strengthening and improving the administrative policies and practices of the Civil Service; a slew of them in the 1970s one on **Training Requirements for Government Accountants and Auditors**, another on a **New System and Classification of Pay**, and yet another on **the Creation of the Ministry of the Public Service** (which was actually implemented in the 1980s, under the auspices of the World Bank, there were two administrative reform programmes (named ARP I and ARP II) which dealt respectively with, among other things, addressing the morale problem of civil servants vis á vis their counterparts in quasi-governmental agencies, the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Committee of Administrative Reforms (IMCAR) to closely monitor the progress of reform programmes and programme budgeting, introduction of a financial management information programme, a human resource management information programme and corporate planning (3).

Whilst progress was undoubtedly made, as reflected for example, in the adoption of programme budgeting, and the early stages of corporate planning, the progress was not fast, nor as comprehensive enough to enable the Government to cope with the challenges of the modern era, such as the newest wave of globalisation and all that implies; reducing the fiscal deficit and, importantly, meeting the rising expectations of the society for better services from the State.

(3) Ministry Paper No.1 1990. The Administrative Reform Programme Phase I and Proposals for Phase II.

The less-than-acceptable level of performance that existed was commented on by the World Bank in a 1996 Report (4). It stated that:

In spite of its numerous agencies and employees, the performance of the public sector is inadequate in many critical areas. The general level of efficiency and effectiveness of public entities is very low. The quality of service to the public is poor and is characterized by cumbersome procedures, long delays and indifference to public convenience.....

It went on further to say The public sector displays characteristics commonly found in most established bureaucracies. Public Sector Entities are governed by rigid rules of business.

(4) Staff Appraisal Report Jamaica Public Sector Modernisation Project July 29, 1996 . Report No. 15388-JM paras. 8 and 11.

Compliance with the rules takes precedence over achievement or organizational objectives. This reduces responsiveness to emerging situations and discourages innovation. Decision-making is hierarchical, superiors are generally reluctant to delegate authority, while juniors hesitate to use even the limited powers that are delegated to them for fear of being penalized for mistakes.....

Hard markers perhaps, but in many respects true and a situation which clearly needed to be addressed if we were going to respond positively to the challenges to which I referred earlier, such as the current wave of globalisation, the fiscal budget and the expectation for better services by the public.

The Government of the early 1990s had recognized the malaise of which the World Bank so trenchantly commented on. In consequence, the Government, with the support of the UNDP, commissioned a report by two distinguished former British Civil Servants to identify and make recommendations on what needed to be done to effect sustainable reforms (5)

(5) Sir Kenneth Stowe and Mr Geoffrey Morgan: Report of UNDP Management Development Programme Mission to Jamaica June/July 1992 Cabinet Office, Jamaica

Their key recommendations were quite explicit.

One priority, they said, was "to get the machinery of [Government] at the centre right - i.e. to fill the void by establishing a capability under the Prime Minister's personal authority to command and control the

determination of strategy and resources, money and people to implement it."

Another, was that "the Prime Minister office should house a strengthened Cabinet Secretariat enhanced so as to take over: (a) full responsibility for bringing together issues which bear on the Government's strategy and presenting them to Ministers via the Prime Minister for collective decision; (b) the lead role in corporate planning for the Government as a whole; and (c) monitor, and as necessary direct the implementation of policy. The holder of the post should be designated the Head of the Civil Service".

The Government accepted these recommendations but took its time to ensure that it had (in its view) the most appropriate person for the job, which after some reluctance fell to yours truly in mid 1993.

This arrangement was in retrospect, an important breakthrough in enabling us to overcome the usual resistance which one can expect from a tradition-bound institution like the Public Service, when sweeping changes are contemplated.

I think it is fair to say that Stowe and Morgan, perhaps from their experience in Great Britain, put their fingers on a problem which hitherto militated against the successful implementation of reform measures: the lack of direct involvement, support and moral authority from the highest levels in Government (the Prime Minister at the political level and the Head of the Civil Service at the administrative level) to ensure that the inevitable hurdles such as flat-out resistance to change, conservative interpretations of the Constitution or subsidiary laws so as to avoid radical changes, are overcome.

In the nearly eleven years since these recommendations were implemented they have had the effect of getting some meaningful changes in the Jamaican Public Service. I will illustrate these briefly with the Cabinet Office itself and cite some examples from the Public Sector Reform Programme.

The Cabinet Office

The role of the Cabinet Office was transformed from one which concentrated primarily on arranging the business for, keeping the minutes and conveying the decisions of Cabinet, to the one recommended by Stowe and Morgan and which was more akin to those of the developed Commonwealth countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

Since its inception there have been, among other things:

- (a) a generally improved quality of policy options placed before Cabinet;
- (b) the 'streaming' of submissions to relevant Committees of Cabinet, or Cabinet itself, to ensure more efficient discussion and disposition of issues;
- (c) better monitoring and evaluation of the fate of Cabinet decisions;
- (d) greater involvement of relevant stakeholders, including the representatives of the private sector, trades unions, and civil society (each category as the circumstances warrant) in matters placed before Cabinet or its Committees;
- (e) better coordination of the Corporate Planning process of government;
- (f) better communication links in respect of Cabinet's priorities with the administrative Heads of Ministries (Permanent Secretaries) and Agencies (CEOs);

(g) better coordination and implementation of the Public Sector Reform Programme;

I turn next briefly to the Public Sector Reform Programme.

The Public Sector Reform Programme

The Public Sector Reform Programme has been a multi-faceted one ranging from: (a) the conversion of a number of state entities into Executive Agencies (after an approach used in the United Kingdom); (b) the introduction of the concept of Citizen's Charters, also after an approach introduced in the United Kingdom, as a means of making state agencies more 'citizens-centred in terms of courtesy, and efficiency of service; (c) the strengthening of policy capacity in all stages of the cycle.

We were assisted in respective parts of this Programme by the World Bank by way of a loan; by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID); the Japanese Development Agency (through the World Bank in some preparatory work) and CIDA.

Time will not permit me to speak on all of these, or as elaborately as I might have wished, on any of them; but I will say a few things about the creation of Executive Agencies, which I might say was the **pièce de résistance** of our reform initiatives.

Ten agencies were transformed; eight fully into Executive agencies and two operating on Executive Agencies principles but for one reason or the other not designated as such in a strict sense.

Four have been in existence as such for five years and six for three years.

We followed a fairly-well established format in creating them. This included: (a) undertaking a **strategic review** on the need for the activity; (b) producing a modernization plan; (c) producing a **medium-term financing plan**; (d) producing a **framework document** which sets out the basic elements of the contract between the CEO of the Agency and the **portfolio Minister**.

They have, in the main performed remarkably well in terms of

- **Innovation** For example:
 - (1) The introduction of a two-shift system of work and the establishment of rural offices so the people from these areas of the country do not have to come into the capital city to get services as was the case before at the Registrar Generals Department and Island Records Office;
 - (2) The introduction of distance training using computer technology at the Staff Training College (MIND).
- **Significantly Increasing Earnings** on the strength of improved services so that the investments made in the reforms have been paid back.
- **Improved Customer Service** reflected in simple things like beverage stations with the provision of hot and cold beverage refreshments for clients during the day at the Administrator General's Office.
- **Facilitating Business** through among other things the use of Information and Communications Technology such as at the National Land Agency which has established an internet based service which provides selected land information 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, (called - eLand Jamaica): the establishment of a GIS system as the backbone for the management of the varied planning and environmental data and the installation of a National Applications Management and Tracking System to be used as a tool to provide information on the status of applications processing systems, both at the National Environment Planning Agency. The implementation by the Customs Department of an Electronic Entry Processing System which,

among other things, allows Customs Brokers to submit C78 entries electronically; facilitates links to the Inland Revenue Department; enables an e-payment system and so on.

- Presentation of timely quarterly and Annual reports on Performance.

In sum, the Executive Agencies have been living up to our expectations and in a number of cases been exceeding them.

The performance of these Agencies as well as the improvements that have been made by those entities which have Citizens' Charters have been resulting in a noticeable change in public perception about the Public Service.

In a survey undertaken two years ago on behalf of the Cabinet Office on a large sample of 16,567 persons the responses to the question: **Do you get Quality Service for Your Money** were as follows:

11%	Very Good
40%	Good
35%	Average
12%	Bad
4%	Very Bad

It is this sort of improvement why, in contrast to 1996, the World Bank was able in a more recent report ⁽⁶⁾ to rate the Jamaica bureaucracy as being of 'high calibre' and giving it a flattering mark of 4.5 compared to 6.0 for the USA and 1.5 for a nearby Caribbean country.

But we cannot rest on our laurels. We must sustain what we have achieved and build on them. But there are some challenges which must be overcome to ensure that we do this.

The two main ones which I see are:

1. The uncertainty in respect of available financial resources given the country's difficult fiscal situation. This could affect importantly, the implementation of ICT which is most necessary for modernization, as at the same time costly.
2. The continuing 'dialectic' between 'reformers' (some of whom, like myself, may soon be leaving the scene) and 'traditionalists' who may not be as excited as we have been about the need for these changes.

⁽⁶⁾ Report No. 26088-JM Jamaica The Road to Sustained Growth Country Economic Memorandum December 4, 2003

I am, however, optimistic, that things will continue to move in the right direction. As a result of:

- a. pressure from our citizenry who would not wish to see any turning back from the gains that have been made;
- b. (hopefully) generous support from bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Thank you.

22nd April, 2004