lack of co-operation and consultation signifies the absence of an institutional mechanism which can resolve the problems, being experienced. Among the service delivery systems, there have been no specific studies of delivery standards and the level of involvement, utilisation and access to public service by some social groups in society, for example, women and the poorest of the poor. Such surveys would help to improve both the design of the civil service reform and the monitoring of its impact. Repeat surveys should be made in order to identify the need to take any corrective measures to mitigate any adverse consequences.

The lack of a policy evaluation process is exacerbated by the lack of policy dialogue, on the civil service reform, with relevant organisations, social groups and individuals. The lack of a dialogue, using consultative group or Round Table process, is a reflection of the protection of interests by the dominating social group in society and state.

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND HISTORY

The purpose of this publication is multifold. In general it is based first on experiences of managing conferences, seminars and workshops on policy formulation, management and evaluation throughout Commonwealth countries. Secondly, it arises from the policy advisory services provided to member states by the Secretariat in which strengths and weaknesses of policy management have been observed. Thirdly it is based on the views, observations, and comments made by senior and top officials who attended a regional workshop in Harare in September 1997 on Policy Analysis. Among these many purposes are:

1.   **To attempt to provide a theoretical explanation on why, how, and what policies are conceptualised, formulated, implemented and evaluated. It also explains the rationale of either accepting or rejecting policy options.**

        While policies have a political and administrative content, they have a political base since they constitute a problem-solving mechanism and conflict resolution instrument in the distribution of power and resources. At the base of all the public policies are power relations. The political economy theory is therefore an attempt to understand the way resources are produced, distributed, allocated, consumed and managed in order to achieve a particular goal within society. The theory also explains the relationship between the countries of the region and the world economy which has been undergoing fundamental structural changes. It assists the politicians, policy advisers, senior servants and those who direct public service, who approach policy and strategy formulation and its implementation in a variety of ways. It also provides a broad view of the socio-economic and political environment from which policies are formulated and managed.

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2. **To improve the seemingly purely narrow technical or institutional approach to the policy management process particularly in the reform of the civil service.**

In the past, little attention has been given to the policy process by researchers, practitioners and or the donor community. Most government institutions responsible for research are either unfamiliar with the policy process concept or are uncomfortable with it. This publication should contribute to the study on policy process, particularly the identification of boundaries, demarcation of its essential peculiar features and identification of dynamic elements and the extraneous forces which impact on it. Unless serious attention is given to policy analysis and evaluation, the efforts of enhancing policy management may not be effective. Thus, an efficient and effective policy management process is essential, if not a prerequisite, to sustainable economic and social development.

It is argued that the organisational structure, management systems, technical skills, knowledge, information system, and overall infrastructure must be available and of a high quality to be able to understand the intricacies of policy development and management. In many countries of the region such capacities are absent, hence their inability to successfully manage the reform of the public service. The experiences of the several civil service reforms carried out by many countries in the region in the Seventies and Eighties should have warned these governments of the dangers inherent in the externally-determined reforms, often imposed, and the likelihood of their failure. Nevertheless, either because of the absence of a historical memory within African governments, or because of the poor means of sharing information and experience or because of the weakness of the governments in the face of pressures from international financial institutions, the civil service reforms which were identical were accepted and implemented during the last ten years using the same philosophy and practices.

Reforms were expected to be implemented by a civil service whose organisational culture was archaic and therefore could not sustain any changes with which it was not familiar and which often threatened its existence. This publication therefore aims to assist bureaucracies to appreciate the need to place emphasis on policy analysis and management, paying particular attention to the conceptualisation and evaluation of the policy processes. It is important for policy managers to realise that the policy management process encompasses a much wider arena than the civil service, though it is central part of it. The multiple links with government on the one hand and civil society on the other, can be properly established through studies, debates and regional sharing of experiences.

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3.   **To support quantitative and qualitative research and evaluative measures on whether or not the goals of the administrative reforms are being achieved.**

In this regard, measurement indicators are suggested, the theoretical perspectives are recommended and the socio-economic and political environment within which the reforms take place are discussed. Such discussions will widen the horizon, limitations and strengths of the administrative systems in managing the policy process. The study also fills the gaps in knowledge on what constitutes a policy process, since both policy-makers and managers appear to be more concerned with minute details of policies themselves rather than the policy process itself in a given environment.

It is argued that there is a need to link the objectives of the reform with the results. For example, if the reform was to achieve efficiency and to improve service delivery, the policy analysis studies should be able to assist in the re-focusing or re-assessment of the policy in order to address the problem appropriately.

Evidence from the reform of the civil service in Ghana, for example, now shows that downsizing and improved pay do not bring about major changes in performance and the delivery of service to the people. Indeed, observers believe that in Guinea, the country with the largest staffing reductions and pay improvements, moonlighting, rent-seeking, and absenteeism in the civil service have not been significantly curbed.[3]

These problems could be identified through policy evaluation which should be an on-going exercise and should be shared within the region by member states.

4.   **To demonstrate, through three case studies from Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, that the administrative reforms can clearly be understood and appreciated if different institutional mechanisms are designed to facilitate the policy analysis and management process.**

The studies demonstrate this in different ways. First, the link between the state and civil society in policy formulation and evaluation, through a consultative forum. The second demonstrates the need to set up a Policy Analysis Unit which assists cabinet in making the well-informed policy decisions which must be implemented by all ministries in a properly co-ordinated manner. Thirdly, the co-ordination of policy formulation by the policy managers, i.e. permanent secretaries under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary, and the link between ministers and civil servants.

The studies demonstrate that there are many ways of doing things differently in order to achieve the desired results. These different approaches constitute the focus of the rethinking of policy analysis and management which has been made necessary by the following events, pressures and fundamental changes taking place in society:

1.   Once policy development was the unique preserve of the public service, now it is less so. A number of key players in the formulation and management of policy have come on board, e.g. external consultants and international organisation, business community, academics and civil society. The bureaucratic culture which is predicated upon a shared set of values and goals and a centralised and a hierarchical decision-making system have been reformed. Further, there is a formal departure from formulating and managing the policy based on purely traditional, legal, rational and normative construction of public policy.

2.   The needs, demands and aspirations of the consumers of public policy and civil society have also changed and require different modes of intervention. Citizens are demanding not just the quantity but also the quality of service delivery making it necessary for the development of new ways of meeting them. Further, the policy management structures and systems are now, more than ever before, expected to be accountable, accessible and answerable to a wider public. Many more checks and balances on the distribution and management of resources have been introduced.

3.   Global changes are now globally similar and shared all over the world. The collapse of command control economies, collapse of welfare statism in developed countries and growing difficulties faced by dependent economies and former colonies, for example, have all had an impact on policy changes in many countries. The strategies for downsizing or right-sizing the public service and decentralising the functions of government have all had an effect on the way in which policies are formulated.

4.   The decrease in the amount of resources available, the reduction in direct control, the increase in the number of players in the policy process and the focus on results have made it necessary to rethink, redesign and reassess the traditional methods of policy development, implementation and evaluation. The need to equip civil servants with skills, knowledge, technology and appropriate attitudes have resulted in changing the way policies have been formulated and managed, in the past.

5.   The recognition that "business as usual" no longer applies to today's economic environment and that the organisations need to be fundamentally altered in order to regain or sustain competitive momentum. The need to employ human resources who are proactive in

improving performance have all made it necessary to think differently about the role of significant others in policy-making process. The issues such as empowerment and service standards have affected public service accountability and ethics.

6.   Rethinking policy analysis and management has emerged out of the changes in the policy paradigm, new policy planning framework, and implementation of new policy strategies which have clearly shown the roles of each of the players in consultation and co-ordination of policy. It has the active ingredients of good policy such as analysis; political sensitivity; policy and stakeholder analysis; language; symbols; values; communications; approval processes; leadership; creativity; timing, and especially judgement, can be combined for success.

In order to understand the impact of these changes, pressures and imperatives, it is necessary to provide a theoritical perspective of the nature and type of the state that implements these reforms. The philosophical assumptions of the state machinery constitute a base upon which methods and rationale for policy choices are formulated. They help to explain why certain policies are preferred to others at any one particular point in time.

The path that is taken in the policy selection process contributes significantly to the development of a rationale for a policy analysis and management framework. An explanation is given on what constitutes the framework out of which guidelines for institutionalising it are suggested and recommended.