

# Challenges for Public Administration

All nations in the SAARC region are racing the crucial challenge of achieving the goal of meeting basic needs of people. A recently concluded seminar held in the Philippines expected random change of governments in Asia due to failure in the alleviation of poverty in the twenty first century. A significant number of SAARC member countries experienced political changes during the last few years. Political governments with strong economic commitment are the expectations of the future. To be precise, the task of bureaucrats or the policy executives needs to be pointed towards realising national dream through utilisation of organisational strength. Channelisation of resources is of utmost importance. Failure to realise the economic programmes given by the policy formulators or politicians, shall affect the stability of the government. So it is high time to think of reforms in attitude and professional profile of bureaucracy.

In less than ten years from now we shall step into the twenty first century. During this last decade of the twentieth century, political changes are taking place in many SAARC countries.

In these countries the change in political environment influenced aims and objectives of the government. The character of the government reflect a deliberate total redirection of tasks with more speedy economic commitment, higher standard of living, improved quality of work life and public accountability.

Thus the expectation from public administration (or bureaucracy) is for more effective organisation, goal and achievement oriented management, high efficiency in performance and leadership for organisational change. This phenomenon is explained in the Table.

The bureaucracy in the 21st century should be designed to accept control from political level and general people. They are to be accountable in its true sense to the political government. Bureaucracy accustomed to paying lip service and escaping from the real action can never produce any effective result.

Thus in the twenty first century, the public administration system must implant a culture of action, in order to be able to fulfil the expectations of the common mass.

**Political environment**

Expected political environment in the twenty first

century can be foreseen by the situation in the last decade of this century. Democracy is expected to be the main culture of the government.

Remarkable change in the form of government in Bangladesh and Nepal opened a new direction towards democracy, decentralization and deregulation.

An accountable government and administration is the demand of the day. Fast and speedy administrative responsiveness to the demands of political institutions and needs of the public is in a greater demand. The journalists are bringing out various issues highlighting the failure of bureaucracy and the cold conflict between bureaucrats and politicians which attract public attention.

In this century, the European, American and now the Japanese management cultures are most prominent and they serve as models for the rest of the world.

**Expected character of the Government**

The political governments in the twenty first century need not only to meet the demand of basic needs but also to

by A M M Khairul Bashar

shall be the general expectations of the people which bureaucracy needs to provide. This will necessitate:

- i. more effective organisations
- ii. provide customer-oriented service
- iii. leadership for organisational change and development
- iv. goal and achievement oriented management

**Features of Public Administration**

The emergence of a new breed of public administration system will be required to achieve speedy social and economic reforms. There will be no scope for conflict between political expediency in achieving national objectives and the professionalism of public servants.

With this shift in political arena, appointments, promotions and the use of discretionary decision making authority of public servants will be needed to change.

A great deal has to be done to evolve patterns of adminis-

tration as possible like independent work stations with less emphasis on hierarchy.

5. reward and punishment system to be more flexible. The lengthy complicated procedure of retrenchment to be avoided. The easy and simple provision to terminate the inefficient and to reward the best to be effectively introduced.
6. provision to include competent professional (other than civil servants) in senior administrative positions to increase overall operational efficiency of the government. The politicians to be assisted by professional expert rather than only administrative expert.
7. decentralization of administrative with appropriate responsibility and authority. Local government institutions to be authorised to staff their own organisation including determination of service conditions conducive to its income.
8. there should be more

the minister alone remains accountable to the parliament committees, Parliament and Prime Minister. He should be the administrative and financial figurehead of his ministry. For this purpose, the minister may appoint professional expert of his political line of thinking at selected positions of the ministry for a defined period.

In the twenty-first century public administration has to be efficient and effective, public servants should be acquainted with computer applications in management systems. They should also have the knowledge and skill of system analysis and design.

**Impediments**

The expected change in the future will primarily depend on the firm commitment of the politicians. In all situations bureaucracy finds its own way of survival. Effort to create bottleneck in any change that affect their status and culture may continue in an unseen manner.

Manoeuvring the opposition for the embarrassment of the ruling party through motivated information, keeping government under pressure, efforts of creating dissatisfaction among various agencies of the government are likely steps which may act as impediments in changes for administrative culture.

**Positive sign**

The SAARC region is gradually moving towards true democracy. Gradual environmental changes indicate that people's expectations are also changing. True public accountability shall become a practice rather than fashion.

To work with the situation, the culture of administration need to change for the betterment of the common mass.

Providing fast and effective service, goal and achievement oriented management and customer-oriented service etc. should be the fashion of public administration in the future.

Possibly keeping this change in view, David Harschmann commented in his article 'Advisors' were to be replaced by 'consultants'; administration by 'management', calculators by 'computers', 'proposals' by 'systems', 'prof-ormas' by 'printouts' and 'deadlines' by critical paths.

ENVIRONMENT (20TH CENTURY)	EXPECTED CHARACTER OF GOVT. (21ST CENTURY)	EXPECTATION FROM PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (21ST CENTURY)
1. trend in political reform • Bangladesh : change of form of Govt. • Nepal : change of form of Government	1. More economics commitment a. higher standard of living. b. Improved quality of work life c. poverty alleviation	1. More effective organization 2. Speedy performance 3. Goal and achievement oriented management. 4. Leadership for organisational change and development 5. Provide customer oriented services etc.
2. Thriving private sector etc.	2. More accountable Govt. 3. commitment for social security and welfare.	

ensure steady development. The technological lead of developed countries are advancing fast.

Failure to achieve the goal of meeting basic needs of the people in the twentieth century shall affect the political arena. Issues like improved standard of living, poverty alleviation, social security and welfare may become the firm political commitment. Democracy is expected to be the main culture of the society. Political institution will be much more organised, strengthened and committed to realise people's right. The political institutions may be competitive in fulfilling people's hopes and aspirations.

As the democratic plant grows into a tree, there will be less and less tolerance of ineptitude. Speedy performance

trative responsiveness to the public. It will be necessary to develop mechanisms for public participation in government decision making.

To make public administration system efficient, goal-oriented and to be able to provide customer like service, the following are needed to be considered in the twenty first century:

1. flexibility to be increased and organisational behaviour to be conducive to innovative thinking and planning.
2. official performance are to be based on achievement of goal, analytical problem solving skills and smart work.
3. promotions to be based on performance only rather than seniority and merit.
4. jobs to be arranged as mu-

delegation of power from the ministries to its attached directorates, autonomous bodies and from central government to local government bodies.

ministries (secretariat) should be staffed largely from its attached departments and organisations within its control. This will provide development of organisational culture climate and tradition for effective performance. The present system of deputation at selected top most position should be eliminated as far as possible.

10. All official within the control of a ministry are to remain accountable to the concerned minister while

# Self-help Movement is World's Biggest Challenge

by Harold Pieris

THIS diminutive former teacher has literally walked with kings, yet continues to keep the common touch.

And in a world increasingly preoccupied with cities, not villages, the movement that this man founded continues to start with the smallest unit — the individual.

Abanagamage Tudor Ariyaratne pioneered Sri Lanka's self-help movement which has touched the lives of more than a third of the country's rural population.

For his achievements, he recently won Japan's coveted Niwano Peace Foundation's ninth Peace Prize. Previous winners include Brazilian archbishop Helder Camara and the World Muslim Congress.

In its citation, the Niwano Peace Foundation cites "the Sarvodaya Movement as the world's largest citizen-led movement conducted by a non-governmental organisation."

Thirty years ago, Mr Ariyaratne started the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, which means "Awakening of all by voluntary sharing of resources." From 1962-67, the movement soon worked in over 100 villages, increasing its reach to over 400 villages by 1972 and to 7,000 villages by 1990.

Today the movement touches the lives of 4 million rural people and has spread into 8,000 villages, attempting to raise the standards of the poor through self-help.

In each village where the movement spread, a number of youths were trained in several skills. They educate and organise work within the villages, always stressing self-reliance and self-development.

Today there are around 30,000 such youth trained in various fields such as health, housing, sanitation, environment and rural industries. Around 7,000 full-time workers, many of them women, are involved in the movement.

One example of the movement's work is in Thengagedera village where 14 years ago the embankment around a small reservoir collapsed. Because the reservoir fed adjacent paddy lands, this meant that during the dry season the village could not cultivate paddy.

It was only when the movement stepped in later that the embankment was repaired — all in just a day. The movement organised a "camp" involving 300 volunteers from the village and nearby communities. Those from other villages brought their own tools, Thengagedera residents supplied the food and no bulldozer was used.

From 1986-90, about 20,000 such "camps" were organised by the Sarvodaya movement and involved over 1.4 million people in self-help projects. It is not only in building wells, footbridges and low cost housing that the movement is involved in. It also gives technical and financial feasibility studies of village



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projects, provides legal aid, as well as relief and rehabilitation in disaster areas.

Though an indigenous movement, Sarvodaya is not a communal movement and draws its support from all major communities in the country. Even in North and East Sri Lanka where sometimes de facto control is with separatist rebels belonging to the minority Tamil community, Sarvodaya centres remain active.

Mr Ariyaratne visits these camps and has not been harped by the rebels with whom trust has been maintained. Although the movement has a Buddhist background, it translates these values into the religious context of the particular village.

Mr Ariyaratne himself sees the Sarvodaya as a revolutionary but non-violent movement. It organises peace marches and public meditation meetings. Workers in the movement address each other as "elder of younger, brother of sister."

The autonomous Sarvodaya Economic Enterprises Development Services (SEEDS) links villagers with financial institutions while the Sarvodaya Movement Training Institute (SMTI) created recently trains rural cadres in management skills. Newly created bodies handle such matters as welfare work, women's upliftment and peace activities.

Mr Ariyaratne was born in Unawatuna, a village near the southern port of Galle where, he says, the surrounding poverty led him to believe in self-help. There he developed the movement's motto: "First the awakening of the individual, then the community, the country and the world."

He says the movement started when he led a group of teachers and students during vacation to work in the rural villages of Sri Lanka. By 1969, his work among the community was recognised when the Ramon Magsaysay Award (the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize) was given to Mr Ariyaratne's work in community leadership.

In 1989, the Ramon Magsaysay award Foundation provided a US\$10,000 grant for Mr Ariyaratne's project to train village leaders and enable their communities to pursue self-help activities. Chosen were five impoverished villages in central Sri Lanka which were prone to both flooding and drought.

All through self-help, five pre-school/community halls were constructed, 105 latrines were built and five water wells were finished. The main contribution of the villagers was their labour — for construction and building many kilometres of roads and footpaths. Seven people have undergone training courses in leadership and 12 were trained for child care.

# UNCTAD Shows the Need of a Revamp

THE Colombian government expected hundreds of eager and curious journalists to come to Cartagena for the meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

But few journalists turned up at the international media centre to speak with the more than 1,000 delegates from 171 nations. The press evidently took the view that the 1992 UNCTAD conference — like most of its predecessors — would achieve little or nothing. Journalists had reason to be sceptical. In its 28 years of existence, UNCTAD has relatively little to show to its credit.

Since the second conference in New Delhi, when the industrialised nations granted Third World countries some development assistance and tariff concessions, there has been scant progress.

UNCTAD conferences on international trade became just confrontational debates between the developed and developing worlds.

At each meeting the developing nations demand greater access to the markets of the industrialised countries. They assail the protectionism of the rich countries, and press for accords to ensure a fair return for Third World exporters of commodities such as sugar and coffee.

The industrialised nations, though paying lip service to the developing countries, in practice make only limited concessions. The indignant sense of entitlement manifested by many Third World nations irks and number of the delegates from richer nations.

More important, the economic policies still pursued by some developing countries runs counter to the laissez-faire philosophy of bankers and commercial officials. There used to be, for example, little ideological sympathy for the developed world for countries like Tanzania, which rejected capitalism and opted for a socialist policy of economic self-sufficiency.

Other Third World nations, such as Ethiopia and Angola, were torn apart by internal conflicts, attributable in part to the Cold War. As a result, their economies barely functioned, let alone developed.

As for the poorest developing countries, such as Bangladesh, the rich nations basically dismissed them as a lost cause, with economies so impoverished their plight defied solution.

Other Third World countries, however, present brighter prospects because of their natural resources, their internal stability, and their relatively advanced industrialisation.

Colombia is one such nation. Recently, its export income has been rising briskly, in part

because of new trading accords with the United States and the European Community (EC).

Industrialised nations have granted Colombia favorable tariff treatment in recognition of its efforts to control international cocaine trafficking.

The Colombian government has also espoused the free trade policies of the World Bank and thrown its economy open to competition from abroad. This earns the country development credits and

benefits industrialised nations, anxious to export capital goods to the Third World.

But Colombian and other Latin American nations that have expanded their trade with richer countries, have done so as a consequence of bilateral negotiations with the industrialised nations.

They have largely ignored nebulous organisations such as UNCTAD, which represent so many diverse interests that they rarely produce anything more than speeches. Colombians are quick to point out

that UNCTAD is in no position to implement any of the international trade resolutions ratified at its meetings.

They also point out that industrialised nations tend to write off UNCTAD as well-meaning but essentially irrelevant. The real decisions on international trade are made elsewhere, in Washington, Bonn and Tokyo, and Third World nations have little say in such determinations.

The latest UNCTAD summit in Cartagena has run true to form. The meeting opened on February 8 with a speech by Colombian President Cesar Gaviria urging the industrialised nations to open their markets to the Third World.

But Gaviria couched his plea in cautious tones. Colombia has already priced open its wealthy markets by its own efforts — with no need for UNCTAD.

For example, more than 80 per cent of Colombian exports to the US are covered today by tariff concessions. For the Colombians, the international trading battle has already been largely won.

The rest was rhetoric. Nobody, for instance, took Colombia's newly-appointed Minister for Foreign Trade too seriously when he called for the resurrection of the International Coffee Agreement, whose collapse precipitated a disastrous fall in world prices.

Members of the International Coffee Organisation have met repeatedly to discuss a new accord that would revive prices, but the talks ended in deadlock. In these circumstances, UNCTAD representatives are unlikely to resolve so intractable an issue at this meeting.

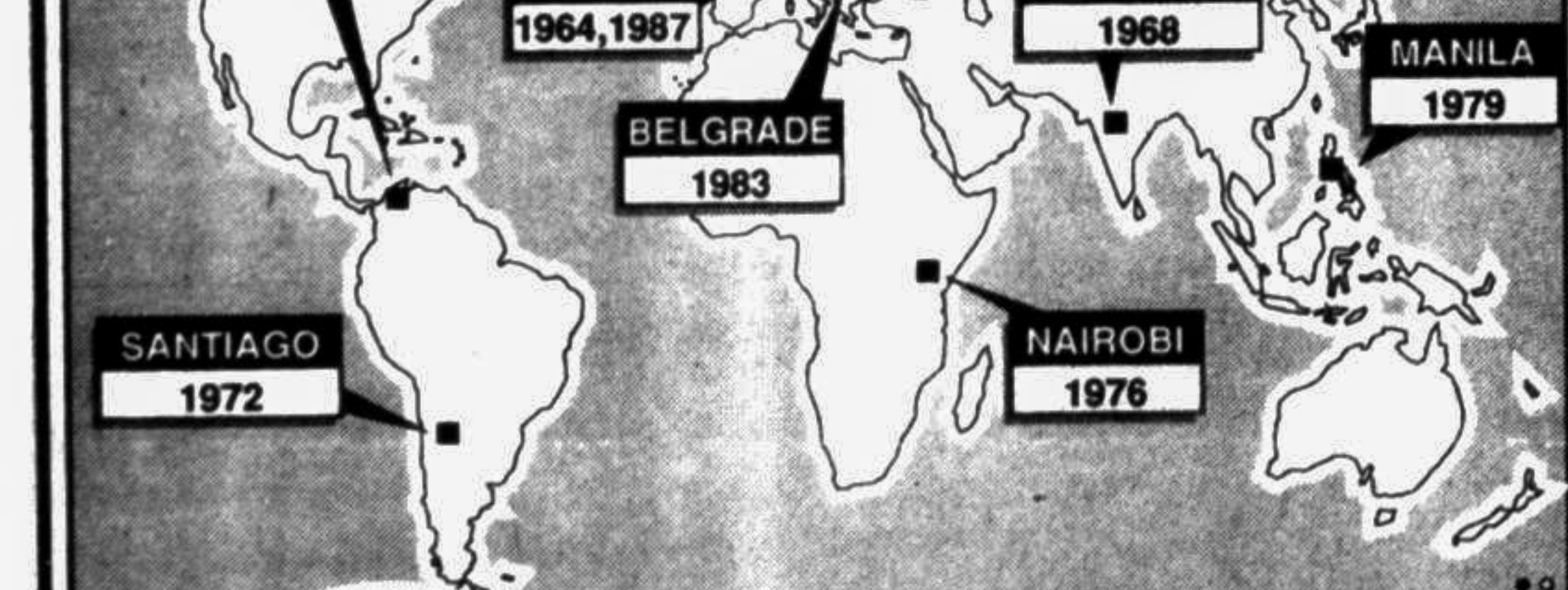
Third World delegates argued that the rich countries should ease the foreign debt burden of developing nations.

There were other areas in which delegates from both rich and poor countries were in general agreement. They concurred that poorer countries need trade rather than aid to progress. There was also agreement that UNCTAD, if it is to survive, must be restructured and technified.

If nothing else, perhaps a revamped UNCTAD might be considered worthy of coverage by the press. — Gemini News

## ABC of UNCTAD Member countries 171

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
UNCTAD VIII - Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) Feb 8-25



**UNCTAD is permanent organ of General Assembly, financed by UN regular budget**  
**Founded: 1964**  
**Objective: To promote international trade and economic development in Third World**  
**Secretary General: KENNETH DADZIE (Ghana)**

# Sixtyfive speak for 565 Million

by Idriss Jazairy

IT was a historic gathering at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, a gathering covered by over 400 journals. Never had so many First Ladies come together — 65 of them from all corners of the globe.

Rarely if ever had views of Heads of State and Government met to bring to world attention a more serious issue: the alarming and growing number of rural women now living in chronic destitution.

The figures are stark. About one billion rural people — almost one-fifth of the world's entire population — live below the poverty line. Some 565 million of these are female, more than twice the population of all of North America. And not only are there more rural poor women than poor men, but their numbers are increasing faster: in the past two decades, the number of poor rural men rose by 30%, the number of poor rural women by 50%.

Why this imbalance? The reasons are deep and complex, but they can be summarized in two sentences. Women as producers — for they are producers, being responsible for growing at least half of the food eaten by their families, as much as 70% in Africa, and earning vital income — have been barred, deliberately or through neglect, from the basic resources and support they need. And with accelerating migration from the countryside, mostly in search of work in urban centres, more and more women have been left to operate the family farm alone.

But the aim of the recent Geneva Summit, organized by

the Rome-based International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a UN agency whose sole mandate is to assist the rural poor become productive and self-reliant, was not merely to sound the alarm. It convened to call on governments, development agencies and the international community at large to engage

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in an immediate and concerted effort to address the problem.

The theme was the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, and the Declaration that the Summit issued spelled out both the obstacles women face and those policies and actions needed to help women overcome them.

In addition to the formidable barriers confronting poor rural women in the developing world, a host of factors prevent women from realizing their productive potential. By law or custom, they are far too often denied access to basic resources — land, agricultural inputs, credit and the like — and are bypassed by extension services and training

programmes. The traditional assumption has been that women, while important on the domestic front, are essentially irrelevant in the productive arena. Or, equally erroneously, that development activities directed towards the "household" — with the implicit assumption that its "head" is a man — will somehow automatically benefit women.

IFAD's experience in designing and financing 313 projects in 94 countries has demonstrated that both these assumptions are false and that effective, sustained development can only be achieved if women are recognized as full and equal partners with men. Indeed, as the Summit has stressed, women are the key to rural poverty alleviation, increased agricultural productivity and improved family welfare in many regions of the world.

The Summit in Geneva — the commitment of its participants, the clarity of its Declaration, the interest of worldwide media is an encouraging step towards remedying what is perhaps the world's gravest problem. No war has yet killed and maimed as many people as have poverty and malnutrition. Now awareness and concern must be converted into concrete, effective action. The potential is there — 565 million women — waiting to be unleashed.

Idriss Jazairy is the President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, a specialized agency of the United Nations headquartered in Rome, Italy.