

## THE INITIAL SIGN OF SUCCESS OF THE REGIONAL HUB OF CIVIL SERVICE IN ASTANA

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The Regional Hub of Civil Service is an initiative of Kazakhstan Agency for Civil Service. The idea of its creation was to use the knowledge and experience of countries of CIS as wealth of the nations for the reform and modernization of public sector so that civil service can be an effective engine to drive just and fair socio – economic development through improved governance for sustainable development.

The experience of developed and developing countries shows that the public administration and its alignment with its national, regional and global environment is of prime importance for development of countries. It is believed that public administrations of countries can have a strong impact on the social and economic condition of citizens and development of the nation through the process of public policy formulation and its effective and efficient implementation. The public sector needs to align its structures, working procedures and talent management with the accumulation of experience and scientific knowledge at national, regional and global levels. Hence modernization of public institutions is a major task before governments to manage the development of their nations.

The transition and developing countries are in need of introducing civil service and public sector reforms. The scarcity of resources and the demand of citizens for improved services require that public sector institutions utilize technology and scientific knowledge to improve their performance through reform and modernization of their structure, process and management of people.

Although reforms are country-specific as structures, processes and people management need to be aligned with a country's political, economic, social, and technical capacities, the reform concepts, trends and knowledge, innovation and successful experiences can

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be shared, transferred, adapted and indigenized. Hence, sharing reform experience between and among the countries facing common situations is valuable. One of the good mechanisms for sharing the experiences and information is establishment of joint centers of innovation and excellence. There is a need for countries to share resources and expertise to work on the common problem and use the result of that for their countries' specific needs. The Regional Hub of Civil Service established in Astana of Kazakhstan with the participation of CIS countries, Georgia and Afghanistan is one of the excellence centers. There is a strong need for developing regional centers to enable countries to share experiences and learn from innovations of each other for reform and capacity building of the public sector, improved efficiency and sustainable development of countries and regions.

Based on this need Kazakhstan has taken the initiative of establishing the Regional Hub of Civil Services, and Afghanistan is a member of the Hub. The first initiative of the hub was the organization of a Global conference titled 'Modernization of civil service: increasing the efficiency for sustainable development'.

This conference was held in Astana Kazakhstan on 22 May 2013 and a delegation headed by chairman of the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) of Afghanistan Dr. Ahmad Moshahed participated in the conference. The other two members of delegation were Mr. Sayed Zabihullah Saways, Director General of Administrative reform Secretariate, and Mr. Farhad Osman Osmani, Director General of Civil service institute of Afghanistan. A presentation on the capacity building and its challenges in post conflict countries was presented by Mr. Farhad Osman Osmani.

The conference focus was on the three main topics, namely the Civil Service reform and its progress and challenges in CIS countries, Knowledge management and its utilization in the public sector, and modernization through regional cooperation. The three topics have been very important for the participants.

It was a useful experience that all participating countries were in the process of reform of their civil service management systems

and different countries were at different stages and one common theme was the development of public administrative leaders to lead the civil service for improved efficiency resulting in sustained development.

Research and knowledge formulation and development is important, but most important is the use of knowledge to improve the performance of public institutions and of innovations in the public sector. This was also an important theme and a need for the developing and transition countries.

The third topic was modernization through regional cooperation. In modern governance concepts the so-called collaborative governance is the need dictated by the modernity and there is a need to use the competitive advantages of varied stakeholders in order to improve the performance. Therefore, sharing knowledge and experiences through exposure visits, learning tours, seminars and workshops on a theme of common interest is effective investment in modernization of public sector for improved efficiency.

Afghanistan is in the process of reform from a heavily centralized and traditional civil service to one of modern, democratic, results oriented civil service system, and drawing from the experience of others is most needed at this time. Afghanistan shares similarities of socio-economic and political situations with the some CIS countries and is a member of Regional Hub of Civil Service established under Kazakhstan initiative.

The delegation also participated in the first Steering committee of the Hub in which it was decided that the hub should start its operation by establishing three working groups namely the training and research working group, the knowledge management and experience sharing working group, and the regional cooperation working group. Afghanistan has been an active member and took the lead of the training and research working group.

During the conference a number of bilateral meetings with government authorities of Kazakhstan and Afghan delegation took place which are a clear indication of willingness of the two countries to work in partnership for the development of their respective

countries using the opportunities of regional cooperation under the 6<sup>th</sup> Astana Economic Forum.

The Chairman of Civil Service Commission of Afghanistan also had a meeting with the Chairman of Kazakhstan's Agency for Civil Service affairs, His Excellency Mr. Alikhan Baimenov in the presence of His Excellency Afghanistan Ambassador to Kazakhstan and Vice-Rector of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The prospects for cooperation between the civil service institutions of the two countries were discussed during the meeting. Kazakhstan committed that a Memorandum of Understanding would be signed between the two countries to make operational the cooperation on the training of civil servants utilizing the opportunities available.

This exemplifies the use of the Hub as a center for cross fertilization of ideas and concepts and sharing knowledge and experiences in the field of the civil service reform in the countries of the region and countries of common experience and interests. We are committed to use the facilities of the Regional Hub of Civil Service and contribute to its development as an active member.

Moreover, I would like to mention the importance, usefulness of UNDP as a mechanism of facilitation and transferring know-how of reform and linking the countries to share their experiences for modernization of civil service and increasing the efficiency for sustainable development. UNDP country offices and UNDP through its UNPAN network is a useful mechanism to connect nations and countries for sustainable development and a better life for all initiatives. UNDP Kazakhstan and UNDP Afghanistan have been working together to make this initiative happen and provide the required technical and financial support through its south- south cooperation mechanism.