



Konrad
-Adenauer-
Stiftung

المركز اللبناني للدراسات



The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies

Administrative Reform in Lebanon: Approaches to the Challenge of Change

Narrative Report

**19-20 November, 2003
Beirut, Lebanon**

The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) organized, in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a national workshop on “**Administrative Reforms and Government Renewal in Lebanon**” that was held on 19-20 November 2003.

One of the major challenges that has faced Lebanon's post-war reconstruction and its developmental efforts has been the very deficient state of its public administration and the quite weakened status of its governmental bodies after fifteen years of conflict. Over ten years later, and in spite of some attempts at reform, rehabilitation and reorganization, serious and far reaching administrative reform is still a crying need. The post-war reconstruction model led to an inflation of the public sector and today the state pays salaries to over 130,000 employees (civilian and military) representing about 14% of the workforce and salaries, benefits and pensions represents over 63% of the total public expenditures outside the service of the debt.

The state of the public sector is considered a major obstacle to the current efforts at budget deficit reduction, efficient and equitable delivery of public goods, effective facilitation of the administrative needs of citizen, enterprises and communities, and transparent governmental structures, accountable to the citizenry.

The workshop engaged into an assessment of the major problems of the Lebanese administration and efforts at administrative reforms, and examined issues such as the impact of political clientelism and sectarian balances over the size, the appropriateness and the level of qualification of recruited civil servants, in the last decade; the vicious circle between the fiscal crisis of the Lebanese state and the overwhelming weight of salaries in the state budget on one side and the need to improve salaries level to attract competent and dedicated staff to the public sector on the other side; the declining level of efficiency and productivity of most civil servants, with ageing, increased disqualification, and apparent in adaptation to the modern work processes, technologies and administrative techniques; the overstaffing of particular categories and sectors and the understaffing of other categories and sectors and the rise of temporary and contractual employees versus the shrinking of the permanent cadre of civil servants; the confusion, contradictions and overlaps in the legal prerogatives and functional attributions of many governmental units, leading to the slowing down and sometimes the blockage of administrative processes and actions; the complexity, over concentration and inefficiency of the decision-making systems and the weakness of implementation and follow-up on public policies; the spread of petty corruption and sometimes grand corruption and the high costs for ordinary beneficiaries and citizens; and the several projects, partial initiatives and previous attempts at administrative reforms over the last decade and an evaluation of their impact and limitations.

The Ministry of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) participated extensively in the event and the Minister Mr. Karim Pakradoni, attended a large part of the workshop and engaged actively in discussions with the participants. A large number of senior civil servants from the ministry, as well as from other ministries attended the workshop, in addition to key actors in the policy and research communities, and a number of representatives from the private sectors, the civil society and concerned organizations.

The LCPS gathered the relevant documentation, conducted planning meetings and consultations, and commissioned the papers. The papers covered issues such as state-citizen relationships after the war, the development of culture of corruption, the reform projects of the nineties, the cost and size of the public sector, and the need for a strategic vision of administrative reform.

The proceeding of the workshop will be edited in-house and published in a collective book, including the papers, and the major policy recommendations for the future of administrative reforms and governmental reorganization in Lebanon.