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REFORMING THE GOVERNMENT OF PORT MORESBY

Hal Colebatch
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Hal Colebatch

Dr Colebatch is a Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
An introduction in the form of a parable:
the case of the Paga Point flour mill.

An overseas company wanted to build a flour mill in Port Moresby. The company first approached the National Investment and Development Authority (NIDA), whose job it was to decide if the project was consistent with the national investment priorities; NIDA decided that it was, and gave its approval.

The company then asked the Department of Natural Resources if a suitable site was available; what they wanted was a piece of government-owned land on the harbour. The department identified a site on Paga Point which met these requirements.

The company then asked the Town Planning Board for permission to build a mill on that site. The Town Planner confirmed that the land was zoned Heavy Industrial, and recommended that the Board approve the application. The Town Planning Board did this.

At this stage, the company still had several steps to take before it could build its mill: it had to apply to the Land Board to be granted the land in question, and it had to submit the plans of the proposed mill to the Building Board and get approval to build it. But it was felt appropriate to make a public announcement that the flour mill would be built at Paga Point.

Some bodies then expressed doubts about the plan. The City Council (which had not been consulted) expressed opposition to the siting of the mill: it felt that tourists entering the harbour did not want to be met by a dusty, noisy mill as they came into the wharf. The Office of Environment and Conservation was unhappy about the way the decision had been taken — as a single decision, relating only to the proposed flour mill. The Office felt that there would be other industries also looking for harbour sites, and that what was needed was a comprehensive plan for an industrial area with access to the harbour.
By this stage, though, there seemed to be no way of raising this sort of question. The use of the land for a flour mill had already been approved, and none of the approvals still to be granted seemed to be relevant to the question of whether it was a good idea to have a flour mill at Paga Point or not. As it turned out, there was yet one more approval needed - that of the Harbours Board - though it was not clear on what basis the Harbours Board would grant or withhold its approval. People therefore began to ask how it came about that this project had gone so far without any opportunity for general discussion of its merits.

Why does this happen?

It is important to note that this incident is not just another tale of "everything going wrong" in government: there is a good case for arguing that everything was going "right", in that each official or agency was doing his/its job. What disturbed people was the outcome: the result that was produced by the separate pieces of administrative activity. The outcome in this particular case illustrates the main structural weaknesses in the government of Port Moresby: it is too fragmented, it is too compartmentalized, and it is too bureaucratic.

By fragmented, we mean that the responsibilities of government are divided between a number of different bodies: the Department of Natural Resources, the Building Board, NIDA, etc. Each of these bodies has its own particular, specialized work in the government of the town. There was no single body which could decide whether the flour mill should go ahead or not; the idea had to go along from one agency to the next until all had approved it.

By compartmentalized, we mean that the different agencies of government look after their own specialized concerns, and do not look beyond these. NIDA was only concerned with the project as an investment; the Town Planning Board was only concerned with whether the piece of land in question was in a zone in which the building of a flour mill was allowed. None of these bodies was concerned with the total impact of the mill on Port Moresby, or with possible alternatives to the proposal as put forward.
By *bureaucratic*, we mean that decision-making is mostly in the hands of public servants, and elected representatives have little influence. There are two groups of elected representatives in Port Moresby - the City Council and the three members of the National Parliament - but none of them was consulted about the flour mill proposal. In fact, the only non-official person involved in the flour mill decision was the private-sector architect who is the Deputy Chairman of the Town Planning Board. The proposal would eventually come before the Building Board, on which the Council is represented, but the job of this body is only to check that the design of the flour mill meets the requirements of the Building Regulations.

This pattern of government is characteristic of the Australian mode of colonial administration: it is, in the first place, dominated by specialist, technical values, entrenched in their own organizations. There is an absence of representative institutions, and little consultation with non-officials in any form. Authority is fragmented, not only between departments, but also between departments and statutory authorities with considerable autonomy. In the colonial period, there was a further fragmentation between the authorities in Papua New Guinea and the Department of External Territories in Canberra.

As a consequence, the orientation is towards the administration of functions rather than the government of a place. Numerous officials are concerned with the efficient performance of particular functions within the city; no one is concerned with the nature of Port Moresby as a whole - with the development and the problems of the city as such. (In some respects, this is true of the whole Australian colonial inheritance in respect of area administration, but it is much more pronounced in the towns because that is where the technical specialists are concentrated). Officials were unable to respond to the Paga Point flour mill proposal on any but narrow, technical grounds: no person or body was responsible for considering its impact on the town as such, and there was no area in which the different policy values involved in the proposal could be taken into account together, and some resolution of the conflict attempted.
Countervailing pressures

Although the dominant pattern of urban government has been the specialized, fragmented pattern described above, there have been institutions with broader concerns which could have acted to counterbalance this narrow, technical orientation—notably DDA, the town planners and the City Council. It is desirable, therefore, to look at the role these bodies played in the government of the town...

DDA

DDA has traditionally been regarded as the agency of co-ordination within government. The role of the DC/PC as the direct representative of the Administrator/Prime Minister was seen as particularly important in securing co-ordination between the different agencies of government—or so it would appear from the circulars which went out on this subject from time to time. What this actually meant in practice was something else again. Co-ordination was easiest when other government field staff were few in number and junior in status. As their number and seniority grew it became less likely that they would all happily follow the lead of the kiap in preference to their own departmental inclinations. In these circumstances, the effectiveness of kiap co-ordination depended on such factors as personality and the ability to manipulate strategic resources.

1. Now the Division of Development Administration of the Department of Provincial Affairs (DDA), formerly the Department of District Administration, and known also by various other titles. Officers of DDA are known as 'Kiaps'.

2. Before Independence, the main geographical unit of administration was the district, headed by a District Commissioner (DC). At independence, the districts were renamed provinces, and the DC became a Provincial Commissioner (PC). The National Capital District (NCD), however, remained a district, with a DC.
In the towns, the odds were weighted against DDA as far as its role as a co-ordinator was concerned. For a start, it could claim no particular expertise in urban matters: it was seen as an organization primarily concerned with rural administration. The towns were the places where specialist officials of other departments were concentrated, and where they were most likely to be attuned to departmental views rather than the requests of a DDA co-ordinator. It is therefore not surprising to find that DDA has not played a strong co-ordinating role in the towns (particularly the larger towns). Instead, it has sought out a specialist role of its own - as specialists in "native affairs". To the extent that district and sub-district (now provincial and district offices) have been involved in urban matters, it has largely been over such traditional kiap matter, such as dealings in customary land and the maintenance of routine administration. The DC/PC has been more involved in the procedures of administrative co-ordination, both in his own right and as chairman of various committees such as the District Co-ordinating Committee and the Town Advisory Committee. But this is not to say that he has had much impact in this area.

The Town Planners

A town planning structure on Australian lines was established in Papua New Guinea in the 1950's: a Town Planning Ordinance was passed, which created a Town Planning Board, and a position of Town Planner was created in the then-Department of Lands, Surveys and Mines. Plans were drawn up for a number of towns: these involved dividing them into zones of a particular type - residential, light industrial, etc. - and imposing limits on the sort of activities which could be carried out in each zone. The Town Planning Board reviews applications for the use of alienated land in the towns, and has power to vary the application of the zoning regulations in particular cases.

In other words, town planning has been interpreted in 'professional' terms as land use control: in fact, town planners have said that it is often more convenient for them to work through the powers created by the Land Act rather than through the formal provisions of the Town Planning Act. The planners were not responsible for the growth of an urban
community, nor have they been linked in any meaningful way to the operation of the machinery of government as a whole. Just as the kiaps became specialists in native affairs, the town planners became specialists in land use control.

The City Council

In any discussion of the co-ordination of bureaucratic activity, it is important not to overlook the political dimension. Political bodies are more likely to have a broader, "area-oriented" perspective to set against the specialist, "function-oriented" perspective of the bureaucrat. (This is not to deny that politicians are exposed to the risk of being "captured" by the specialized bureaucratic interest they represent). At the national level, the co-ordination of bureaucratic activity is an important function of the National Executive Council. In other countries, people have tried to achieve a more co-ordinated approach to urban government through an expanded role for local government: this has always been a possible policy avenue for Papua New Guinea, even though it is not one which has been taken up with much enthusiasm.

For a start, the towns were among the last places in Papua New Guinea to get local government. Although councils spread rapidly throughout the country throughout the 1960's, the major towns did not get councils until 1971. When urban councils were established, their responsibilities were fairly narrowly defined, largely in terms of the provision of water, sewerage and garbage services. They were entitled to take action in a range of other areas, but were not responsible for these areas, nor did they have any formal role in relation to the urban activities of other governmental bodies, whether departments (e.g. Health) or statutory bodies (e.g. the Housing Commission). In other words, the way in which the councils were set up predisposed them to adopting a limited and specialized function in the structure of urban government.
In the particular case of Port Moresby, the potential for an expanding role for the City Council was limited by the political struggle between the council and the central government that developed after the 1974 council elections, in which Papua Besena * supporters secured a majority on the council. The council passed resolutions calling for separate independence for Papua, and expressing opposition to the location of the national capital in Port Moresby; the central government responded by threatening to abolish the council (see Daro 1976: 19). The conflict subsided, but it was now politically futile to look to the City Council as a means of bringing about the closer integration of the work of government in the city.

The establishment of the Port Moresby City Council did however provide some scope for an experiment in the integration of government services at the local level. The council, on its establishment, divided the city into seven wards, each with a ward committee consisting of the three councillors for the ward and some others, and provided for a substantial devolution of control over council activities to the ward level. It envisaged the appointment of ward executive officers of the level of assistant district officer or community development officer to take an active role in the work of government within the ward. But the idea received little support from the central government. It would not make experienced officers available to serve as ward executive officers, nor did it take action to focus central government activities in the town on the ward centres. Ward offices were built, but they were staffed with junior clerks who remained in the office, and they did not serve as centres for governmental activity, and the experiment never really got off the ground.

* Papua Besena is a political movement which originally sought independence for Papua, but has become a radical pressure group seeking greater benefits for Papua within the present system of government.
The consequences of fragmented government

The first consequence of the failure to link together the various pieces of the machinery of government is a lack of co-ordination. As this phrase has become a cliché in government circles, often with quite novel meanings ("They will not co-ordinate with us"), we should be more precise here. It is not just that different agencies within government have different views of tasks and priorities: it is that there do not exist institutions or procedures for knitting these into a coherent governmental view when one is required. There was no government position on the Paga Point flour mill: there was no way in which one could emerge. In the end, this situation was in no one's interest, since the company cannot now be sure that the project will go ahead. "Co-ordination", here, is about processes and possibilities; the structure of urban government is such that there are few of these possibilities for hammering out an agreed line of action. For this reason, there has been no government policy on the urbanization process as such: only a collection of part-policies from bodies partially concerned in the urbanization process.

The practical implication of this lack of co-ordination can be seen in the example of the ward centres proposed by the City Council. The council could propose the idea, but had no formal channel for getting the support of other government agencies and ensuring that they, too, focused their services on ward centres. The best possibility of securing the co-operation of government departments would have been through a cabinet decision, but the City Council had no power to put a proposal to Cabinet. Even if they had found a department (e.g. the Office of Local Government) to sponsor their proposal, and even if it were accepted, it would still not have bound statutory bodies such as the Housing Commission, or the voluntary agencies. It would have been open to the council to lobby the various agencies individually, but in a situation where the project is to persuade various bodies to move in one particular direction simply because everyone else is doing so, individual persuasion is far less effective than collective decision-making. But there was no arena for such a collective decision.
The second consequence is a lack of cover: because government policy is framed through specialized agencies, "policy gaps" develop in areas not covered by existing agencies. The "squatter" settlements are a good example: because there was no agency specifically responsible for these (and no agency wanted to move into the field), there was for many years no policy on the subject. The development of a policy came about partly as a result of political change (the formation of the Coalition Government in 1972), but also to a large extent as the consequence of the emergence of an agency with a legitimate concern in this field (i.e. the Housing Commission). In the broader sense, this is also the reason for the absence of a comprehensive policy on urbanization as such. On the personal level, "lack of cover" is experienced as a "bureaucratic run-around", where a person approaches a number of agencies in turn on some matter, but finds that every one passes the responsibility for handling his case to someone else.

The third consequence of fragmented government is the limited impact of government action: government initiatives are the concern only of a small group of officials in one agency, and their impact within the machinery of government, let alone the wider world outside, tends to be rather small. For instance, the National Health Plan places considerable stress on diverting patients from the (relatively expensive) hospital outpatient clinics to the (cheaper) urban health centres. Nearly three years after Cabinet approved the Plan, there is little evidence of any major change in the pattern of outpatient care in Port Moresby: in fact, the Tatana aid post has been closed (reflecting a lack of interest on the part of the village people and the City Council). The question therefore becomes not so much whether the policy in question was right or wrong, but whether or not it was significant: does it have any impact on the pattern of government activity? In fact, achieving the sort of change envisaged by the National Health Plan would mean securing the support of many other individuals and organizations, not all of which are within the public service proper or the public sector as a whole. But the structure of government does not offer channels through which this sort of support can be obtained.
Port Moresby as a special case

Most of what has been said so far about urban administration applies, to a greater or lesser degree, to all the towns in Papua New Guinea. But there are some particular features which apply only to Port Moresby, making it something of a special case.

First, there is the weight of the "headquarters presence" on the field officials. The departmental field officials for the National Capital District are (usually) not physically located in the departmental headquarters but they are in much closer contact with headquarters, more open to pressure from their departments, and much more attuned to departmental perspectives than their colleagues out in the bush. Particularly in the more remote provincial headquarters, field officers from different departments are likely to develop personal relationships with one another which help to overcome "departmentalism" in administration. Sometimes, they appeal to their colleagues - the Provincial Co-ordinating Committee or the PC - for support against their departmental Headquarters. This is not as likely with the field officials in the NCD: they are less likely to see one another "after hours," and less likely to see themselves as part of a group, to which they can appeal for support if necessary. In other words, the provincial OICs in Port Moresby as a group, are more fragmented, weaker, and more dependent on their departments than are their counterparts in other towns.

Secondly, there is the absence of a strong political force which could act to draw together the scattered pieces of government, and to impose some sense of goals and priorities. In other towns, the movements towards provincial government offer some scope for progress towards policy integration through the political process. The situation is rather different in the NCD, where the conflict between the "indigenous" and "immigrant" sectors of the population is more pronounced, and where the main political institution (the City Council) has aligned itself with the indigenous side. This in turn has meant siding with a separatist group against the central government, which has tried to discount the significance of the views expressed by the council. (In this it has drawn support from the electoral turnout figures: only 16% of the
enrolled voters voted in the 1974 council elections, and the turnout at two by-elections in 1976 was less than 3%). Nor do the recent moves by the newly established Central Provincial Government to absorb most of the NCD back into Central Province seem likely to lead to the development of a broad-based political force in Port Moresby: even if such a move took place, the evidence suggests that the provincial government would represent the "indigenous" interest against the "immigrant", and the interests of the peri-urban hinterland as against the interests of the town itself; for this reason, it would have difficulty in gaining acceptance in national government circles as the authentic spokesman for Port Moresby. In this situation, the emergence of a strong political voice to speak for all the people of Port Moresby seems unlikely.

What sort of policy approach?

If it is accepted that the core of the problem is the fragmentation of government authority, the absence of links between the agencies of government and between those agencies and bodies outside government, and the consequent ineffectiveness of much government activity in the promotion of policy aims, then the next question is what sort of policy approach - e.g. what sort of goals - would be most effective. In the abstract, one could envisage a wide range of policy approaches. In the real world, however, it is more fruitful to concentrate on policy approaches which are not too remote from present and past patterns of government - i.e., approaches which can be hung on some "peg" in the consciousness of present-day decision-makers. Decision-makers in general are reluctant to take large leaps into the dark, and the present Papua New Guinean decision-makers, for a range of reasons (many of them good ones) are particularly cool towards proposals for dramatic innovation in the operations of government. I would argue that in this context, three plausible policy approaches can be distinguished: these can be briefly tagged the "bureaucratic authority", "political authority", and "arena" approaches.
The "bureaucratic authority" approach is one that perhaps comes most readily to decision-makers brought up in the colonial bureaucratic tradition: if authority is divided and weak, appoint a strong official to hold authority over everyone else. This has long been argued in relation to rural administration: the District Commissioner should be given the authority to instruct the specialist staff (e.g. the doctor or the road engineer) what to do. Similarly, it has been argued that the way out of Port Moresby's governmental problems is to abolish the City Council and appoint a Commissioner who would have authority over all public servants in the iCD. (Sometimes, the proposal is for a multi-member Commission rather than for a single Commissioner: this has rather different implications from the single Commissioner proposal, although both are put forward for the same purpose: to remove "politics" from city government).

This approach has obvious attractions, notably the apparently clear line of command from the Commissioner down to the specialist officials. And certainly the grip of "departmentalism" on urban administration would be shattered if such a system could be made to stick. But there are limitations to this approach which must also be borne in mind. In the first place, as a glance at the working of any government department will show, putting different officials in the same department, working under the same departmental head, does not magically produce co-operation between them where there was none before. In the second place, securing the support of government departments for a single policy approach is only the beginning. Many of the institutions which play very important roles in the government of Port Moresby would not be affected by this approach - e.g. statutory bodies such as the Housing Commission or the Harbours Board, voluntary agencies such as the Port Moresby Community Development Group, and private sector employers and investors. The political representatives - the MPs and the City Council (if it continued to exist) - could not be made subject to an appointed Commissioner. And some of the most important people as far as the development of Port Moresby is
concerned are not in organized groups at all - i.e. the town residents who have built (and will continue to build) the "squatter" settlements, and the customary land owners of the Port Moresby area; they occupy crucial points in the urban decision-making process, and their consent could not be committed by an appointed Commissioner.

A further important limitation to this sort of policy approach is that it is almost certain that it will not come about, at least in the form in which it is advocated. The fact is that departments are strongly entrenched institutions within the government structure, with a long history of successfully resisting attempts to prise any of their powers from them in the interests of greater co-ordination. The almost total lack of success of the attempts made over the last five years to have departmental head powers (of some sort or other) delegated to District/Provincial Commissioners suggests that any proposal that departmental heads should relinquish their authority over their field staff to some sort of urban commissioner will be strongly, and probably successfully, resisted.

The "political authority" approach also seeks to put a strong authority over the variety of government agencies, but sees this authority as being an elected, political body rather than an appointed official. The underlying argument here is that co-ordinating the work of different sorts of government agency over a particular area is not merely a technical question to be carried out by officials, but a process involving decisions about priorities, and the relative weight to be given to different sorts of priorities - in other words, about political choices - and that it should therefore be in the hands of a political body. This was the approach taken by the Constitutional Planning Committee to the problems of co-ordination at the provincial level: it saw the answer to these problems as the creation of a political body - the provincial government - to which the officials could be subject.
There would be a Provincial Secretary to knock the heads together, but he would derive his authority from the fact that he spoke for the provincial government, not from having hierarchical, bureaucratic authority over the other officials. This approach (which is rather different from the pattern of provincial government now being adopted) has not been applied in the government of the towns in Papua New Guinea, where the central government has generally been very wary of giving significant powers over the towns to elected bodies. The approach has however come up in several policy proposals for the government of Port Moresby: that the City Council should be turned into a provincial government for the NCD, and a more recent proposal from the Central Provincial Government that the NCD should be absorbed once again into Central Province.

The strength of this approach is the underlying argument: the process of co-ordination clearly does involve political choices - a point usually overlooked by those who argue for administration by a technocratic, "non-political" Commissioner of Commission. And there is a strong and impressive tradition of comprehensive town government through elected local bodies, particularly in the U.K. It is clearly one of the options available. But there are limitations to its potential effectiveness in the particular case of Port Moresby. One is that a political authority (assuming it to be something like a provincial government) would not have a great deal of authority outside the public service proper: as far as dealings with the statutory authorities, the voluntary agencies, the private sector, and the "unorganized" are concerned, the political authority would not be much more effective than an appointed Commissioner.

There is also the question of the form of representation: the extent to which all urban residents would in fact be represented (and served) by an elected body. The experience with the Port Moresby City Council is not encouraging. The low turnout at council elections has already been mentioned. The councillors from the majority faction excluded their opponents from all council offices (Oram 1976: 255) and there have been allegations that council spending has been concentrated in the
predominantly Papuan areas of the city rather than spread evenly throughout (see, e.g. Post-Courier, 11 December 1974). The belief that the Council has neglected particular areas on political grounds is used by many government officials as an argument for excluding representative bodies altogether from the administration of the town. Even so notorious a democrat as Mr Bernard Narakobi has stated that all city councils should "be disbanded and replaced with small management teams" - Post-Courier, 16 March 1977. One might have expected that the shortcomings of the council as a representative institution would have led to demands for changes that would make it more representative - such as a strengthening of the ward committees, the co-option of community activists, perhaps experiments with different ways of choosing representatives, etc. - rather than to proposals to eliminate the representative element altogether, but the conviction that political representation is only hindrance to good administration is widely shared among government officials.

Both of the previous approaches have sought to establish an overriding authority within the structure of government; the "arena" approach is more concerned to find ways in which the various bodies involved in the government of the town can reach agreement to produce positive outcomes from the conflicts which arise between them. This approach assumes that there are, and will continue to be, different bodies involved in the running of the town, that these will have their own bases of authority and support, that it is not possible to bring them all under one overriding authority, and that the differences which arise between them will have to be resolved through negotiation rather than through authoritative direction. In other words, it assumes that such bodies as the Department of Education and the Housing Commission and the Community Development Group and the settlers themselves will all continue to have an independent decision-making capacity, and that the task is to find a structure in which these bodies will find it easier to agree on a common course of action than they do now. What is wanted is an arena in which these bodies can participate and out of which can emerge some agreement on broad priorities and specific courses of action. (On arenas on politics, see Bailey 1969).
An arena approach, then, implies a search for incorporating structures, which will encompass a wide range of decision-makers. It also calls for people who can "hold the ring" (to vary the metaphor a little) — i.e. people who are concerned with the maintenance of the decision-making process as such, as distinct from the roles of individual participants from the various institutions. In other words, it implies people who are concerned with the government of Port Moresby as such, and with the way in which different sorts of decision-makers participate in it. These roles may be full-time or part-time, permanent or rotating: all the approach implies is that they should exist and be recognized.

Finally, an important element of the arena approach is that there should be some resources at the disposal of the arena. What these may be — funds, housing, public esteem, or whatever — is not important: what is important is that there should be something at stake in the proceedings of the arena which participants value, and which could contribute to the achievement of their own goals. This gives them an incentive for participation in the arena. If the resources controlled by the arena are sufficiently strategic, participation will be essential.

The arena approach, then, assumes that conflict is inevitable, but that it is possible to channel it to constructive ends. To many, it is an unattractive approach, seeming simply to legitimize the weakness and indecisiveness that is crippling the government of the city at present. Putting this sort of approach into practice may create a much higher level of friction than people are accustomed to: interaction will throw off more sparks than inertia. The approach requires a certain level of sensitivity and skill in conflict management (although this skill is more evident in Papua New Guinea than many other political systems). And there is always the danger that the central arena will become a logjam which is bypassed as people try to find their own individual solutions to urban questions.

Despite these limitations, this paper argues for the pursuit of an "arena" approach as offering the best possibility of positive action in this field. The present situation is largely one of stalemate: none of the parties concerned can really expect to get their own way, but they do exercise
enough power to be able to prevent effective action by others. The imposition of some overall authority (whether political or bureaucratic) seems unlikely to be attempted. Even if it were, it can be confidently assumed that existing departments and authorities would ensure that the co-ordinating role was so thoroughly emasculated as to represent no real check to their power. An arena approach offers the best chance of action (although, of course, it does not guarantee it).

Specific proposals

Such an approach would call for change at three levels of government: first, at the national policy-making level, where we have already noted the absence of any focused responsibility for urban development; secondly, at the level of the city as a whole; and thirdly, at the neighbourhood or council ward level.

(a) National level

At the national policy-making level, the first need is for a focal point of political authority. At present, no minister is specifically responsible for questions of urban development, which makes it difficult for any comprehensive policy on urbanization to be formulated or given any meaning within the governmental process. It is important, therefore, that specific responsibility for urban development should be vested in some minister; for various reasons, it would seem appropriate that this should be the Minister for Provincial Affairs. Outside Port Moresby, urban policy involves close links with the various provincial governments, and the experience of dealing with provinces as whole entities is in many ways analogous to the process of grappling with a policy on urbanization. But obviously a case could be made for vesting this responsibility in some other minister: the important thing is that it should be vested somewhere.

This minister would need policy and administrative support from the public service, of a sort that is not presently available. This implies the creation of a new organization: this, however, would be likely to aggravate the problem rather than ease it, since the essence of the problem is the proliferation of organizations. The support organization
for the minister should therefore try to draw together the different institutional strands in policy-making rather than to establish itself as a separate and distinct component. One way of attempting this difficult feat would be to establish a joint organization, drawn from the major agencies concerned with urbanization. An office of this kind (which for convenience we will call an Urban Policy Unit) would be rather like a standing task force: its members would be held on the establishment of their own departments and authorities, but would be posted — either full-time or part-time — to work with the Unit. The fact that they would continue to have a leg in their parent organizations would help to encourage better communication between the Unit and the rest of the government, and to dispel the suspicion and antagonism that these organizations would be likely to feel towards the Unit. The bodies which should be represented in the Unit should perhaps be:

- the Area Planning Branch of Provincial Affairs
- the General Planning Branch of the National Planning Office
- the Town Planning Section of Natural Resources
- the National Housing Commission
- the Bureau of Statistics.

The functions of the Unit would be (a) to draw together information on what is happening in urban areas, and in particular, on the impact of government activity; (b) to relate what is happening to government policy, and to advise the minister on policy matters; and (c) to promote communication between the arms of the national government, provincial governments and urban authorities. There will, of course, be scope for tension between the loyalties of Unit staff to their parent organizations and the cross-departmental function of the unit, but such tension can be constructive and indeed creative. Given a modest amount of understanding within the parent organizations, it should be relatively easy for Unit staff to contain any such tensions.

(b) The city as a whole

This approach assumes that the present fragmentation of governmental authority in Port Moresby will continue, to a significant extent, for some time. The task is, therefore, to devise ways of achieving more integrated and responsive decision-making within a relatively fragmented structure. What is proposed is an "umbrella" body, which would incorporate
representation from the various governmental bodies involved in the administration of the city and other relevant groups. It should have a statutory existence, a permanent core of its own staff (in addition to the representatives of other bodies), a network of field officials, and established links with the policy-making and allocation processes of the central government. For convenience, this body may be called the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC), though this should not be taken to imply any similarities with any other body of the same name.

Although the current restructuring of the public service provides for the integration of non-commercial statutory authorities into the public service proper, it is still important that any body set up to counter the fragmentation of government in Port Moresby should be a statutory authority itself. There are several reasons for this. The first is that the task is not simply to secure better co-operation among public servants. There are several authorities, commercial and non-commercial (e.g. the National Housing Commission, the Harbours Board, the Land Transport Control Board, etc.) playing an important role in the running of the city. There are also two kinds of political representative (councillor and MP), as well as voluntary bodies (such as the Port Moresby Development Group) and bodies completely outside the present structure of government (such as the customary landowners in the NCD). It is most unlikely that the establishment of an interdepartmental committee (for instance) would be sufficient to attract the participation and commitment of this wide range of non-departmental bodies.

The second major reason for establishing a statutory authority is that this would help to counteract the overwhelming presence of the headquarters of the various departments and authorities. Field officers in the NCD tend to have less scope for autonomous, "place-related" action than do their counterparts in rural areas, since they are much more visible and accessible to their supervisors in the headquarters, and tend to be permitted less deviation from the departmental line. The absence of a clear political authority in the NCD - i.e. the absence of any proto-provincial government and the weakness of the City Council in this
respect—also tends to reinforce the dominance of the headquarters. The NCDC could act as an organizational counterweight to the various headquarters, and provide some support for field officers in their dealings with their own headquarters.

In establishing this sort of "umbrella" body, the problem is to include all the bodies with a significant role to play in the running of the city, without at the same time making the organization so large and diverse as to be unworkable. There are many such bodies, and not all of them are concerned with the same aspects of urbanization, or to the same degree. This suggests that it would be useful to think of the authority itself as a "core" body, concerned with the central issues, with various "satellite" bodies being established to deal with particular specialized aspects of urbanization. In other words, the NCDC would be a relatively small body, made up of representatives of the bodies most directly concerned with the growth of Port Moresby. It is suggested that its membership might be as follows:

Chairman
Secretary for Provincial Affairs
Secretary for Natural Resources
Secretary for Labour, Commerce and Industry
Housing Commissioner
Superintendent of Police, NCD
The Lord Mayor
The Town Clerk
One of the MPs for the NCD
One representative of the voluntary agencies operating in the NCD
One representative of the customary landowners of the NCD

(A full-time position)
(representing DDA, Social Development and Area Planning)
(representing the Lands and Town Planning sections of the department)
(representing Business Development, Industrial Development and NIDA)
(representing the City Council as a body of elected representatives)
(representing the City Council as an administrative body)

(e.g. the churches, the PM Community Development Group)

(see below)
The representation of customary landowners is likely to be difficult. They are not a united group, nor are their interests necessarily in harmony with one another. But it is extremely important that they be involved in the policy process. In the past, urban policy has been based on the assumption that urban development could only take place on alienated land: the role of customary landowners in the process was to sell their land to the government, which would then either build on it, or lease it to private firms and individuals who would do so. Increasingly, however, customary landowners are refusing to part with the title to their land, fearing for their future if they divest themselves of land rights altogether. Violent confrontations between landowners and police led to the development of the town of Arawa on land leased directly from the local landowners, rather than alienated to the government. (This principle has not been applied in Port Moresby or other towns). If landowners are not involved in the process of urban policy-making, they will tend to see urban expansion as a threat to their land and to the integrity of their communities. It is therefore worth making a particular effort to incorporate them in policy-making. One approach would be to make provision in the legislation for a landowner representative, chosen by the landowners themselves, to sit on the commission, but to provide also for some form of interim voice for landowner interests - e.g. provision that the District Land Court Magistrate for the NCD should sit on the NCDC until landowners can put forward their own representative. This sort of arrangement would give landowners some inducement to come together to put up a representative, while encouraging communication between landowners and policy-makers in the meantime.

The "satellite" bodies around this core would be committees (or working groups, or task forces, for those who feel that there are already too many committees) concerned with specialized subjects, such as transport, housing, etc. They would be made up of members of the NCDC, together with representatives of other bodies with a special concern for the subject matter of the particular committee. These bodies would include:
In addition to the commission itself and its committees, there would need to be some form of administrative support. In the first place, there would be a need for a small secretariat, not only to provide basic clerical services, but also to provide a niche for a small number of "policy" officials, responsible to the NCDC itself, and monitoring the nature and impact of government activity in the NCD, and feeding policy advice and alternative choices to the commission. This role is needed to help the members of the commission stand back a little from their roles as representatives of particular agencies and to see questions from a broader perspective, as members of the commission. In addition to this Secretariat, it would be desirable for the Ward Executive Officers to be a part of the NCDC staff. (This aspect of the proposal will be discussed in greater detail below).

The NCDC would then have a formal organizational structure looking rather like this:
NATIONAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Chairman

Provincial Affairs Lord Mayor
Natural Resources Town Clerk
Labour, Com. & Ind. One MP
Housing Commission Vol. agencies
Police Landowner rep.

Transport

Education
Health
Transport, Works Housing & Settlement
& Supply
Finance

Employment
P.S.C.
& Ind. Devt.
P.M Council of Trade Union
Chamber of Commerce

Employment
& Ind. Devt.

Committees of the NCDC

Ward Executive Officers

P.M Council of Trade Union
Chamber of Commerce
Nat. Planning Office
Electricity Commission
Harbours Board
Central Provincial Govt.
Etc.
In considering the functions of the proposed NCDC, we need to think about them at two rather different levels. On the one hand, it could be said that the primary function of the NCDC is to promote communication between the various individuals and bodies involved in the government of the city, so that decision-makers in one sector are conscious of the perspectives and priorities in others, and are willing to take into account, and to some extent defer to, broader, more "place-oriented" considerations in the policy process. On the other hand, this is not really the sort of task that one sets out to accomplish: it emerges as a consequence of doing other, more specific, things. In other words, to use Schaefer's distinction, it is an outcome of the process, rather than an output. The range of specific tasks that the NCDC could be assigned is a wide one: I would distinguish three areas of particular importance, without claiming any exclusive merit for them.

First, there is a function related to planning. There are already several sorts of "plan" in existence for Port Moresby, ranging from formal "town plans" to the short-range operational intentions of the various agencies of government. These serve various purposes and are known to various audiences. Some decision-makers who might have been expected to know were surprised to learn in 1977 of the Harbours Board's plan to expand the wharf area towards Hanuabada, even though this was part of a plan laid down in 1970. In part, this reflects the extent to which people have changed jobs since the plans were drawn up; it also reflects the fact that there is often less routine passing on information about future intentions than one is led to believe. One of the first tasks for the NCDC should be to search out the various plans that exist, to compare them with one another to discover what they cover (or do not cover), how compatible they are with one another, and to what extent they are determining the pattern of urban development, and are seen by decision-makers as being of continuing relevance. This would establish a baseline for further work towards the development of an effective and comprehensive planning process for Port Moresby, though it must be stressed that it would not, in itself, be "planning". In the course of this review, however, a large number of decision-makers from different organizations would come to have in common a consciousness of the meaning and the limitations and the possibilities of "planning" in Port Moresby: with sensitive management, this consciousness could become the base on which new and more effective structures for planning and decision-making could be built.
This review of plans for Port Moresby would clarify what the intentions of the decision-makers are, and as such would be an important first step towards a better-informed and more effective governmental process in the city. A complementary and equally-important step would be an examination of the impact which government activities have on the town: what comes out of this whole process? This sort of information is not really available for Port Moresby. Departments and statutory authorities do evaluate their own work to a greater or lesser extent (usually lesser), but rarely are there specific evaluations of Port Moresby services, and the impact which these have on their target populations. Still less do we find studies of Port Moresby residents, or specific groups of them, and the impact which government services as such have on them. These gaps are particularly important when policy in relation to urban settlements is being considered. This is the sort of information gap which the Area Planning Branch of DPA and the Policy Secretariats of the provincial governments are trying to bridge for the provinces, but there is no body in the NCD either responsible for doing it, or likely to take steps to do so on its own initiative.

It would be desirable, therefore, to impose a statutory responsibility on the NCDC to monitor and report on both the plans of the various agencies of government, and impact which the activities of government are having on the city.

A third important responsibility that should be given to the NCDC is that of developing a ward-based administrative structure which could offer better co-ordinated and more effective services at the local level. The details of such a system will be discussed below; what should be noted here is that because the sort of ward system envisaged here would involve integrating the activities of the field officers of a number of different agencies, it would have more chance of success if it were sponsored by a body which was seen as relatively "neutral" (such as the NCDC) rather than by one of the operating departments or authorities, which might be seen as mounting a take-over bid. It is therefore envisaged that the proposed Ward Executive Officers would be formally held on the staff of the NCDC, but that they would be responsible directly to the City Council on council matters, and to the commission on other matters.
Finally, the commission should be made responsible for monitoring and making recommendations on the pattern of public expenditure in the NCD. Under the National Public Expenditure Plan now being developed, departments seeking funds for new projects must have support of the relevant provincial authorities for these proposals. It is not clear at this stage what this provision will mean for the NCD: certainly, there is just as much reason for the authorities in the NCD to be consulted about future spending plans as there is for the authorities in any of the provinces. At the same time, there is no central authority in the NCD - comparable to a Provincial Government or Area Authority - which could speak for the NCD here. The proposed NCDC would be such an authority, being broadly representative of "government" as such in the NCD, and should be given this responsibility.

The NCDC would therefore become the central structure in the "arena" of the government of Port Moresby. It would have a full-time chairman and secretariat who would be concerned with "holding the ring" - i.e. with trying to ensure that the NCDC did incorporate the significant decision-makers, and did deal with the substantial issues of urban policy. This is a task which requires diplomacy rather than direction (and, indeed, it is likely that at least in the early stages, the NCDC may resemble the UN General Assembly, rather than the integrated management teams that planners like to talk about). And by virtue of its role in the framing of expenditure proposals, the NCDC would represent a resource to departments and agencies, and they would therefore have an incentive to participate seriously in its work. The NCDC would be quite workable from the outset, and could be expected to run more smoothly as its members got used to working through a collective body.

(c) The ward level

Here, we are speaking of local-level administration, the level at which the services are actually delivered. The model is the present ward structure of the Port Moresby City Council, but to use this model is not to imply that the present wards are the ones that should be used in future. Many of the present wards are far too large to be counted as local administrative units; in some cases, too, areas now relatively small but with a high potential for growth (e.g. Morata) might need to be set up as separate wards now to facilitate their development.
The sort of changes that are needed at the ward level are basically those that were intended when the ward system was introduced, but which have not been fully implemented. Port Moresby is a large, spread-out city, with very great differences between neighbourhoods. The point of a ward-based structure of government is first, to bring services closer to the people, and secondly, to enable officials to learn more precisely what the characteristics and service needs of individual neighbourhoods are.

This was why wards were introduced in Port Moresby, but they did not work in the intended way because first, other government bodies showed little interest in using the ward structure, and secondly, the officials appointed to the ward offices remained in the offices rather than "patrolling" their wards. (This was because they were not trained for a "patrolling" role, and also because their clerical responsibilities kept them in the office during working hours). Consequently, the various departments and agencies of government each maintain their own forms of liaison with their urban clients, with varying degrees of effectiveness, while the ward offices of the City Council remain almost unused. Similarly, there is little integration of service points: in any area, such important service points as the health clinic, the market and the Housing Commission office are likely to be in quite different places.

There is still a need, then, for a ward-based system: the question is how it could be implemented on a wide scale? On the evidence of the outcome of the first attempt at doing this, it would appear that there would need to be three elements of a successful strategy. The first would be a clear policy decision to work through a ward system. The City Council had hoped that other agencies of government would work through its ward offices, but there was no clear directive from the government that they should do so.

The nature of the problem is clearer now than it was at that time, and the decision-making capacity of the government is stronger. It is reasonable to expect that a policy decision of the NEC to set up a National Capital Development Commission would incorporate a decision to support a ward-based administrative structure, and that this decision could then be used as a lever against reluctant departments and agencies.
The second element needed is skilled and active staff in the wards to develop them as organizations. It was pointed out earlier that one of the reasons for the initial attempt to set up a ward system was the fact that the ward offices were staffed by clerks, rather than by the "urban kips" originally envisaged. What is needed is a group of Ward Executive Officers with maturity, energy and experience in dealing with people and organizations. Such people might be found in such organizations as DDA and the Division of Social Development (the urban role of which would need to be completely reviewed in the light of this sort of administrative change - see below), or in non-governmental community development bodies. It would be a public role of a very flexible kind, with the exact definition of the role being shaped by the interaction between the WEO, the ward committee and the various governmental bodies involved, and not necessarily being a uniform role in every case. It has been noted earlier that it would be convenient if the WEOs were to serve on the staff of the NCDC itself. One of the reasons for the City Council's failure to appoint higher-grade ward staff was the refusal of the government to second public servants to these posts. One would expect less opposition to the idea of public servants working for the NCDC.

The third element would be specific, carefully-prepared plans for using a ward structure to promote a more systematic and accessible pattern of service delivery to urban residents. This would require extensive consultation between the WEO, officials of the service organizations, and the ward committee and ward residents. This would mean establishing what the actual coverage was in respect of each service - what health clinics, for instance, there are where they are, when they are open, how much of people's health needs can they meet, how extensively are they used, etc. From the answers to this sort of question it would be possible to draft plans for a clinic service within the ward which would more nearly fit both the service demands of the residents and the policy of the Health Department to decentralize services and treat people away from the general hospital as much as possible. This sort of planning should also take in activities related to service provision, such as the use of the ward as a statistical unit. On all these matters, the WEO would report to the NCDC, which would have been charged with the task of developing this ward structure, and would therefore have some formal standing for putting pressure on the departments and other agencies to co-operate.
The organization of a fully-developed ward might look something like this:
(a) Consequent change

The changes advocated here might seem to imply a further expansion of urban officialdom in a country already often criticized as being dominated by an urban-oriented bureaucracy. In fact, they could be achieved by transforming existing positions, and need not involve any net increase in staffing levels. With the introduction of the NCDC and the development of ward structures, the need for DDA as an organization would largely disappear (as far as the NCDC was concerned): it has been evident for some time that the DDA structure is not suited to the needs of urban administration. Some DDA staff may take up positions in the new structure (e.g. as WEOs); the others could be transferred back to the field, where there is an undisputed need for them. The Community Development Officers of the Division of Social Development are another group whose role should be reviewed in the light of the new arrangements. It can be argued that much of the CDO's present function as an intermediary could be performed as effectively, and perhaps more so, by someone like the WEO, who would occupy a pivotal position in the government structure. There would probably be enough positions on the NCDC establishment of these two divisions to meet the staffing needs of the NCDC and the WEOs, which would mean that the new structure could be established by a reallocation of existing resources.

Conclusion

Any proposal for reform can be criticized, and no special claims are made for this one, except that it is a vast improvement on the present situation (i.e. the total absence of an urban decision-making structure) and that the decision-makers, who have experienced all the frustrations arising out of the present system, are in a receptive frame of mind for this sort of idea. It does not "solve" all the "problems": rather, it seeks to create structures and processes whereby the contradictions and tensions inherent in the governing of Port Moresby can be dealt with through known and predictable avenues, and represent manageable aspects of the process of government, rather than crises. It must be stressed that these stresses and conflicts are inherent: they arise out of the contradiction between the different
perspectives and values of the various actors in the process - the political sensitivity of the elected representative, the "future-orientation" of the housing planner, the technical expertise of the engineer, the clerk's commitment to procedure, etc. This means that the decision-making system has to be able to handle not just choices between alternative courses of action, but choices between alternative criteria for choice. (See Stewart 1976 for a stimulating discussion of "multi-valued choice" and "political-management systems" in urban local government). This is why the proposal calls for an arena in which quite different sorts of people participate - politicians, administrators and technicians. Only out of this sort of body can we expect the broad-based, sensitive and comprehensive perspective on government and approach to decision-making that Port Moresby so clearly needs.

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