

BACKGROUND

The National Public Administration Institute, because of its conviction that the social, economic and political change taking place throughout the world can be guided in the extent that the public sector is able to adapt to the various alternatives available, organized a meeting to analyze the role played by public administration in the continuous phenomenon of change.

During the last several years, the National Public Administration Institute has participated as the organizer on some occasions and as guest at national and international meetings on others, in which current trends of economic and social context on a world scale have been analyzed. In most cases the papers discussed have dealt with aspects of the public sector's ability to adapt and solve problems caused by the process of social change.

Thus, political development models have been given priority in efforts to achieve sustained and integral growth. In such a model the political awareness and participation of public servants, as a prerequisite for them to be agents of social change is specially relevant. Others have proposed models in which industrial development receives priority, and public support for the industrial sector is recommended as basic for the attainment of this goal. Still another school of thought agrees that it is necessary to develop models based on social and cultural patterns, and that public administration must decisively reinforce the education, training and culture of public servants.

The possibility of reuniting these isolated concerns, became apparent when the Mexican Government announced its intention to propose to the community of countries represented at the United Nations, the need for an internationally recognized order to regulate relations among developed and developing countries in order to diminish the increasingly larger gap which separates them. The National Public Administration Institute, aware of the concepts contained in this document, found them in accordance with what administrative science scholars had been proposing for years as regards the role played by public administration in the establishment of an order which would decrease differences between advanced and disorganized countries.

This is how it surged the idea of gathering the most prestigious experts in administrative science at an international conference which, having the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States as a basis, would analyze the public administration's function within this arrangement which seeks to diminish economic, social and political imbalance among countries. The idea was warmly received and supported in international circles and among the most distinguished specialists of administrative science.

This initiative became a concrete plan when the United Nations General Assembly approved the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States on December 12, 1974. From that moment on, the International Administrative Science Institute and the Latin American Public Administration Association decided to give their support to the proposal of the National Public Administration Institute and to hold jointly the above mentioned International Conference which took place in Mexico City on August 25-29, 1975.

Basic criteria for the meeting

These three organizations invited administrative science experts and international institutions dedicated to the study of public administration to attend this conference, whose subject

would be the Function of Public Administration in the Establishment of a New Social and Economic Order.

Enclosed with the invitations, was a basic working document prepared by the National Public Administration Institute, which would serve as a guide for the papers to be presented at the meeting. The document, entitled Notes on the Function of Public Administration in the Establishment of a New Social and Economic Order, is here included.

Forty international experts from twenty five countries were invited personally. Invitations were extended to specialists outstanding for promoting the role of public administration in national development. Of those invited, the ones that finally took part amounted twenty eight guests from nineteen countries of America, Europe and Africa.

Fifteen out of the fifty mexican specialists that participated at the Conference, were from outside Mexico City. Among the invited were students, professors, researchers and public servants.

Objectives

The institutions which sponsored the Conference established the following objectives:

- To propose a strategy to clarify and strengthen the function of public administration in the establishment of a new social and economic order, and
- To make extensively known the conclusions of the Conference.

To a large extent, these objectives were achieved. It can be said that they are faithfully reflected in the final document of the Conference, which represents a consensus of all the participants' opinion. This document is known as the Mexico Plan, and contains the main resolutions adopted by the conference.

The discussion of the main subjects, included in this publication, is summarized in the document prepared by our colleague, Dr. Carlos Paramés.

The Mexico Plan for the function of public administration in the establishment of a New Economic and Social Order

The Plan is divided into three basic chapters: one on the frame of reference; another on the function of public administration, and the third on immediate action proposals.

The important part of the Mexico Plan, is the proposal related to the Function of Public Administration in the Establishment of a New International Economic Order through the implementation of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. It asserts that implementation of the Charter is a challenge to public administration both in developed and developing countries, because it tests the internal and external ability of present administrations to reorganize and strengthen their structures and procedures with the aim of solving the economic and social problems of mankind. It also states that although there may be differences among countries, which must adapt the economic and social system deemed best for their own development, it should also be admitted that the basis for social and economic development in any system, is the administrative creativity of public servants and their ability to carry out the necessary administrative actions to develop and achieve national objectives. Such skill in innovation and implementation is also necessary when countries share and cooperate with international decisions through their bureaucracies. Administrative ability is one of the most critical factors for developing countries to successfully implement the Charter and the Action Program for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order of which we are, necessarily, a part.

By publishing the main documents of the International Conference in the three official working languages, the National Public Administration Institute endeavors to make known

subjects of undeniable importance among all those interested in public administration and at the same time complies with one of the resolutions adopted by the International Conference.

Mexico City, December, 1975