



**CONCEPT PAPER ON STRENGTHENING A STABLE EXECUTIVE AND UNIFORM
NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK**

21/11/2022

Submitted by the Sri Lanka Administrative Service Association as per the request
of Parliamentary Subcommittee on Identifying the Priorities in Formulation of
Short-, Medium- & Long-Term National Policies

CONCEPT PAPER ON STRENGTHENING A STABLE EXECUTIVE AND UNIFORM NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

Background

Sri Lanka has been following the essence of representative democracy since the British Colonial period. In addition to the legislature the executive plays a major role in Sri Lanka. We have passed several milestones in executive structure, such as the Seven Executive Committees (Ministries) (Attachment-1) operated under Donoughmore Constitutional Reforms. These Executive Committees were clearly indicated in the Constitution itself.

Today, the Executive Power is vested on the President and this power is exercised through the Cabinet. The ultimate objective of the Cabinet of Ministers is the policy formulation for the governance of the country.

The responsibility of the Secretary of each Ministry is to assist for the practical implementation of the policy as approved by the Cabinet. The Secretary to the Ministry shall subject to the directions of his Minister exercise supervision over the Departments of government or other institutions in charge of his Minister.

Goals

- Improving the living standard of the citizens through building up long-term national policies
- Building and implementation of a uniform national policy formation framework with a proper continuation, irrespective of political ideologies
- Maintaining the independence of the public service
- Enriching the mechanism to enhance institutional transparency and accountability
- Rationalizing public expenditures in order to reduce fiscal deficit of the country through institutional reforms

Rationale

It is obvious that the lack of uniform National Policy, has become a root cause for the economic and social dilemma faced by the country at present. Since Sri Lanka does not have definite Ministries with properly assigned subject areas, there have been continuous changes in the National Policy which adversely affect for the country in the long run. Foreign investors show a reluctance to invest on the large scale and long-term development projects in Sri Lanka due to this lacuna. Due to the frequent change of the Secretaries, there have been many barriers for implementation of the existing national policies.

Also, it has been experienced that frequent change of the subjects and amalgamating unmatched subjects coming under the purview of the Ministries, have created confusion in the policy formulation and implementation process.

Moreover, frequent changes in the posts of Cabinet Minister as well as the Secretary to the Ministry in recent past have led for the socio-economic instability of the country. Appointing Ministers lacking the required political expertise and also appointing Secretaries lacking the required management and decision-making capacity have aggravated the present crisis.

Therefore, due to this situation the Policy Development Committee of Sri Lanka Administrative Service Association suggests to clearly construct 20 Ministries through the Constitutional Provisions and to establish the permanent Secretary post for all the aforementioned Ministries.

Portfolio of a Cabinet Ministry

There are some essential sectors such as Health, Defense, Science and Technology, Trade and Commerce, Education that should be definitely maintained under the purview of a Ministry. These areas are of primary importance and it is required to have a uniform policy framework for these sectors. Hence it is important to recognize these ministries clearly and establish them along with the policy formulation.

Moreover, there are some dynamic sectors in a country such as Information technology. Since these sectors are changing according to the current global trends the country should accommodate these sectors as per the timely requirements. Thus, it is evident that there are some essential sectors that should be demarcated as ministries and there are some other sectors which should be addressed through ministries according to current social, economic trends (Proposed list of tentative Ministries by the Sri Lanka Administrative Service Association is attached herewith as Attachment II).

Recommendations

- There should be a maximum number of 30 Ministries
- Indicating 20 Ministries definitely on the constitution with the relevant subjects (10 ministries will be created according to the timely national importance)
- Establishing a permanent Secretary post for all the Ministries
(Appointed by the President as per the recommendations of the Constitutional Council)

An executive committee system was introduced under the Donoughmore Constitution.

Accordingly, seven committees were appointed.

- Committee on Home Affairs
- Agriculture and Land Committee
- Local Government Committee
- Health Committee
- Committee on Labour, Industry, and Commerce
- Committee on Education
- The Committee on Posts and Public Affairs

These seven committees had an equal number of members and each committee had a chairman.

Tentative Ministry list

No	Portfolio
01	Minister of Defence
02	Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs (comparative government)
03	Minister of Finance
04	Minister of Transport
05	Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
06	Minister of External Affairs
07	Minister of Commerce and Industry
08	Minister of Education Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
09	Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
10	Minister of Communications and Information Technology
11	Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports
12	Minister of Labour and Employment
13	Minister of Law and Justice
14	Minister of Power & Energy
15	Minister of Health and Family Welfare
16	Minister of Environment, Lands & Land Development
17	Minister of Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Development
18	Minister of Culture and Religious Affairs
19	Minister of Tourism
20	Minister of Settlement Development and Common Amenities