

## **2. Ideal Public Workplace and Securing Human Resources**

### **(1) Public Services in the Labor Market**

#### **A. Changes in External Environment Surrounding Public Employees**

##### **(Position of public employees, changes in roles, and concerns about future roles)**

Facing the aging population combined with the declining birthrate and budget deficits, the government is conducting administrative and financial reviews, promoting relaxation of regulations and structural reforms, and is shifting a part of the public sector to the private sector through the introduction of market testing. Meanwhile, demands placed on public administration, such as assistance for the socially vulnerable and ensuring fairness and equality, are increasing in the major trend of “moving from the public to the private sector” and “market-oriented economic reforms.” Some people view that the range covered by the public sector is shrinking and the roles of public employees are declining. In such circumstances, how to harmonize pursuit of efficiency and realization of public interest is a challenge.

In addition, a consensus has not been necessarily achieved on future roles of public employees in development and implementation of policies, namely, division of roles between politics and administration, under political and cabinet leadership.

Roles of public administration have been shrinking without a sufficient review, so students have difficulty forming a future image of the scale of work in which they will engage and the impact their work will have on society if they work as public employees. This may be one of the reasons why students hesitate to select the public service sector as their place of employment.

#### **B. Decline in Trust and Evaluation of Public Employees**

##### **(Scandals and failure of public administration)**

In recent years, a series of scandals involving public employees including senior officers have been revealed, impairing trust in overall public administration and inviting severe criticism from people. A series of cases attributed to administrative failure, including the spread of AIDS caused by contaminated blood products and the BSE issue, were disclosed after the burst of the economic bubble, which raised suspicions about public employees’ problem-solving abilities. There is a concern that such criticism and suspicions may be lowering the willingness of students to work as public employees for the sake of great social contribution and the public

characteristics of the services provided.

### **C. Lack of Attractiveness in terms of Job Satisfaction**

#### **(A) In-Department Training to Develop Generalists**

##### **(Personnel development based on long-term employment, inability to feel a sense of achievement or growth in a short time)**

The public service sector generally recruits new graduates and provides them with necessary knowledge and skills through work, based on long-term employment. According to the results of a survey, the Cabinet Office and each Ministry develop employees through job rotation. They “let new employees understand the overall operations of the Ministry at a department that deals with general administration” or “assign new employees to routine work” immediately after recruitment. These organizations let employees experience “law amendment” and “planning” at around the fifth year after employment, and “transfer them to another Ministry or agency on a temporary basis” or “assign them to overseas duties” by around the tenth year, although there are some differences among these organizations. These organizations also provide opportunities for studying abroad or at a graduate school in Japan.

Meanwhile, in institutional planning and law bill preparation, for which employees must process a huge amount of complicated operations by certain deadlines, young employees are assigned to undertake a large amount of supportive, simple work such as preparation of materials. This makes it difficult for young employees to feel that they engage in creative work or feel a sense of achievement. Young employees may have a limited opportunity to feel that their duties entail any responsibility. They are concerned that they may not be able to utilize their expertise or maintain and improve skills because of the two to three year-based job rotation system and lack of opportunities to enhance their expertise, such as studying abroad or at a domestic graduate school.

#### **(B) Balancing Work and Personal Life**

##### **(Personal life sacrificed by long-hours of work)**

It is undeniable that employees at the Cabinet Office and Ministries are very busy, primarily for negotiations among the offices and ministries and preparation for the Diet, and that their personal life is sacrificed. In a survey of the Cabinet Office and Ministries, many of these organizations selected “review of

unnecessary overtime work” and “balancing work and family life” as matters that had not been tackled sufficiently. Persons who had experience in both the public and the private sectors also pointed out “wasteful time management” and “necessity to simplify coordination and negotiation processes.”

Such long working hours do not correspond with students’ attitudes toward work and life philosophies and may lead them to think that there may be a more attractive job that gives satisfaction and results for busy work that entails long hours.

#### **D. More Attractive Competitors**

##### **(Finance, insurance, securities, consultancy, think-tank, and IT industries)**

In an interview survey of people who moved from the public sector to the private sector, most of these persons responded that they could obtain more or slightly more “job satisfaction,” as well as “time and a good state of mind” after changing jobs. They could also obtain more “income,” indicating the emergence of attractive job options other than public services. Judging from the attitudes of students and the situation of people who changed their job, major competitors for the public service sector appear to be legal professions, the financial, insurance, and securities industry, the consultancy or think-tank industry, and the IT industry. In recent years, these industries have been expanding the scope of activities substantially in response to changes in economic framework and business style. They are also becoming tough competitors for large enterprises and government offices which have recruited a large number of excellent students.

Furthermore, the interview survey revealed the advantages of these competitors over the public services such as “acquisition of versatile skills and qualification,” “improving skills for career development including changing jobs,” “dynamic duties attracting people’s attention as a result of being a cutting-edge industry,” and “large pressure as results must be achieved in a short period of time but large rewards for results including remuneration and promotion.”

#### **E. Changes in College Education**

##### **(Decrease in the number of students and a shift to professional-oriented graduate school education)**

As a result of the declining birthrate, the number of students is decreasing on a long-term basis and the supply of human resources to the labor market is also

shrinking. It is thus expected that competition for human resources will be more intense.

In addition, professional graduate schools, including law schools and public policy schools, have been established in recent years to provide students with high-level expertise. Graduates from these graduate schools with high-level expertise will be an important supply source of human resources. The new bar examination has made it easier to enter the legal community than before, so there is a possibility that students who hope to utilize their expertise in work will aim for a legal career, avoiding the public service sector.

## **(2) Ideal Recruitment, Development, and Utilization of Personnel for Securing Human Resources**

### **A. Review and Clarification of Job Satisfaction of Public Employees**

#### **(Job satisfaction existing in effects on the society and self-development)**

To recruit and secure human resources, workplaces must provide job satisfaction to employees. Job satisfaction cannot be defined in one way because values and views on work vary by individuals. Judging from students' attitude toward work and opinions of persons who changed jobs, however, job satisfaction can be defined as being able to feel pride and find attractiveness in work, enhancement of expertise and growth as a professional through work, autonomy and selectability in terms of time management and career path, etc. From this perspective, it is necessary to review and clarify job satisfaction and the work style of public employees.

### **B. Establishment of Identity as a Public Employee**

#### **(Clarification of roles of public employees)**

As stated earlier, the clarification of roles and missions of public employees, including the concrete relationship between politics and public administration, is a very important issue in considering job satisfaction of public employees. However, a consensus has not necessarily been achieved. There are various discussions about the relationship between politics and public administration in Western countries. The NPA previously mentioned ensuring neutrality and fairness of public administration in assisting ministers and vice ministers in policy planning processes and in implementing policies in the "Annual Report for FY 1999." The relationship between politics and public administration varies with the history and present situation of the country as well as other factors, and such relationships are not

necessarily fixed. It is necessary, however, to discuss the issue widely from the perspective of processing public administration duties efficiently under the representative democracy.

There are also various discussions about the relationship between public administrations and the private sector. There are many issues to work on, such as achieving harmony between the improvement of efficiency of public administration through introduction of market mechanisms and securing equality and fairness such as protecting the socially vulnerable, the relationship between market decisions and control by the Diet, and accountability to the people. Although there is a trend of “moving from public to private,” it is also true that people’s demands placed on public administration are increasing. Therefore, it is indispensable to thoroughly discuss the missions and roles of public administration, private enterprises, and NPOs in specific fields and achieve a consensus in society.

### **C. Expertise as a Public Employee**

#### **(Expertise acquired through a public employee career)**

##### **(A) Expertise Required by the Public Administration**

As people’s demands placed on the public administration are becoming more complex and sophisticated, public employees are required to have more expertise than before. Also, a larger number of students feel that they need to improve their advanced expertise and skills, in addition to general administrative processing abilities, through career development to play an important role in future society. Expertise required for the public administration is considered as follows:

- a. Advanced expertise in specific fields (Advanced expertise in specific fields: Specialists familiar with individual fields such as finance, environment, and health care)
- b. New management ability (Organizational, personnel management ability to manage a variety of public employees including specialists, fixed-term employees, etc.; organizational management in consideration of an increase in planning and implementation of projects involving private enterprises and NPOs and an increase in coordination across the Cabinet Office and Ministries; and expertise required for generalists such as cost and contract management under the cooperation between the public and the private sectors)
- c. Expertise as an administrator (Ability and expertise to consolidate technical knowledge in each responsible administrative field, determine the direction for

the public administration, coordinate and negotiate with interested parties and concerned ministries and offices, conduct international negotiations and develop policies)

### **(B) Combination of Development of Professional Public Employees and Measures to Secure Diverse Human Resources**

To secure human resources with such expertise, it is necessary to take appropriate measures according to the required expertise. With respect to advanced expertise in specific fields, utilization of councils and study groups, as well as fixed-term employments, should be the major measures to secure human resources with expertise. Expertise as a generalist and an administrator should be developed basically within the department. Mid-career recruitment may be an option to secure work-ready personnel for some expertise.

To secure personnel with advanced expertise for the public administration sector, it is important to combine these measures appropriately, while having a broad perspective without overly sticking to the practices of administrative agency jurisdiction.

### **D. Systematic Development of Young Employees to Maintain Motivation**

**(Systematic development of human resources from short- and long-term viewpoints, and personnel development plan with a focus on employee initiative)**

It is said that there are two ways of securing and developing human resources. One is recruiting new graduates and developing them within an organization from a long-term perspective (guild-type personnel securing). The other is recruiting human resources from the labor market according to the abilities required for the post (entrepreneurial personnel securing). In Japan, not only the public sector but also many private enterprises manage personnel based on the former method.

However, an unreasonable, apprenticeship approach tends to be stressed in the personnel development method based on a long-term perspective and could reduce the willingness of new employees as a result of assigning them to simple, supportive work for a long time.

To prevent such adverse effects, specifically, it is important to develop human resources reasonably in a systematic manner by providing them opportunities to improve their expertise, assigning them duties that entail responsibility, and letting

them select their own career path so that they can feel their own growth. As matters needed to maintain motivation, the Cabinet Office and the Ministries selected; “placement considering the desire of each employee,” “systematic provision of training opportunities,” “provision of opportunities for self-development for improving skills and growth,” and “assigning duties that entail responsibility regardless of age.” It will be necessary to incorporate these perspectives into future training and personnel development programs based on a long-term perspective.

### **E. Modernization of Work Style**

#### **(Reduction of supportive work, cost-conscious time management, and respect for personal life)**

In order to increase the willingness of young employees, it is particularly important to provide them with opportunities to engage in substantial, creative duties, or assign them with duties that entail responsibility. Managers and supervisors need to review assignments, such as minimizing duties that do not provide a sense of achievement, and take measures to implement efficient business processing. Another good idea is reducing the levels of hierarchy by conducting work through project teams, etc. in order to let young employees feel a sense of participation and achievement.

Furthermore, the problem of overtime work has long been pointed out and improvement has been called for over an extended period of time. Unfortunately, however, no satisfactory outcomes have been achieved. The Cabinet Office and Ministries concerned need to take effective measures to reduce overtime work as soon as possible.

### **F. Appealing the Attractiveness of Public Services**

#### **(Providing information to students and presentation of role models)**

Working as a public employee is attractive enough when compared with working for a private enterprise and the Cabinet Office and each Ministry are appealing the attractiveness actively in recruiting activities. Under present circumstances, however, students do not sufficiently necessarily recognize the points of attraction. Therefore, it is necessary to promote information dissemination from students' points of view so that students can see the concrete attractiveness of public services.

Specifically, it is necessary to conduct recruiting activities in which the target of such activities is clarified, such as further strengthening information dissemination

to freshmen and sophomores during the period when they decide on which careers to pursue, considering the fact that many students who hope to be public employees begin to prepare for the examination during their junior year at university/college. At the same time, it is necessary to present role models to students by providing information on young public employees who play important roles.

Conveying the attraction of work in the Cabinet Office and each Ministry, as well as the attraction of working as a public employee, is also important to demonstrate the concrete attraction of the public services. There are a variety of public services with different aspects of attraction depending on the Ministry such as the planning and implementation of projects, transmission of ideas, and provision of specific administrative services. To inform students of such points of attraction is also important.

For example, it is a good idea to actively utilize measures such as internship programs to have students experience actual public services and lectures given by personnel at Planning Officer level who work in the front line at Kasumigaseki (the public administration sector).

## **G. Exploitation of a New Human Resource Supply Source**

### **(A) Professional Graduate Schools including Law Schools and Public Policy Schools**

Securing human resources with advanced expertise has become an important issue as public administrations become more complex and sophisticated. The same is true in the fields of law and public policy. Law schools and public policy schools which were established recently are serving as promising human resource supply sources.

Currently, there are only a few law school students who plan to take the public employee recruitment examination and the public service sector does not attract much attention as a place of employment. However, approximately 30% of students acknowledged the possibility of serving as a public employee utilizing their expertise for a certain period after obtaining a legal qualification. This probably indicates that the public service sector is recognized as a potential place of employment to some extent. Although it has not been long since the new bar examination was introduced and the future human resource supply and demand relationship in the legal community is somewhat volatile, it is important to actively publicize the attractiveness of public services from the present stage.

Meanwhile, a large number of public policy school students are interested in occupations with great social contribution and consider being a national public employee as one of their options. Therefore, it is necessary to further approach these students as a new human resource supply source in the future. It is also important for the public administration sector to provide public policy schools with information on knowledge and skills required for national public employee candidates.

### **(B) Recruiting Person with Expertise**

#### **(Recruitment through selection, fixed-term recruitment, recruitment through the experienced person recruitment system)**

In order to secure human resources with advanced expertise, recruiting experienced persons with advanced expertise, in addition to recruiting new graduates, is important. The public administration sector is currently recruiting specialists with required expertise as fixed-term employees from outside, when work-ready personnel are not available within the sector or when advanced expertise is needed for a certain period. Specifically, the public administration sector recruits lawyers, certified public accountants, financial experts, statistics experts, IT experts, etc. as fixed-term employees based on the needs of the Cabinet Office and each Ministry.

In addition, the public administration sector introduced a system in FY 2006 to promote the smooth recruitment of experienced persons. In this system, the NPA announces the vacancy and verifies the basic abilities of the applicants, based on requests from the Cabinet Office and individual Ministries. Law school graduates who successfully passed the new bar examination and foreign language specialists have been recruited through this system.

Securing external specialists is difficult because persons with advanced expertise are highly needed in the non-public sectors and because these experts are favorably treated in the private sector while the public sector has difficulty providing them with equivalent treatment. In order to secure necessary human resources in a timely manner, it is necessary to appeal the attractiveness of public services and, at the same time, make organizational cultures, work styles, etc. more open and attractive so that personnel recruited from outside can work comfortably.