



**African Training and Research Centre in
Administration for development**



**United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

***General Report of the Third Pan-African Conference of
the Ministers of Civil Service***

***Third Pan-African Conference
of the Ministers of Civil Service***

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Third Pan African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service took place in Windhoek, Namibia, between 5 and 6 February 2001. It was hosted by the Government of Namibia and organized jointly by the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). A total of 41 countries, and 6 international organizations participated at the Conference.

Welcome Address by H.E. the Right Honorable Prime Minister of Namibia, H.E. Hage G. Geingob

In his welcome address, H.E. the Right Honorable Hage G. Geingob expressed the hope that this new century would be the century of Africa. However, transforming this hope into reality requires meeting many challenges. African countries, collectively and individually, will have to overcome the challenges of economic growth in the globalized economic environment, alleviating the debt burden, closing the skills gap, and ensuring that the average citizen's quality of life is raised to the level of the developed countries.

The Prime Minister believes very strongly that one of the prerequisites for meeting these challenges is to transform civil service agencies to make them a formidable force in first line of attack. In continuation, the Prime Minister briefed the Conference about Namibia's VISION 2030, articulated three years earlier with the aim of raising the level of Namibian citizens' quality of life to that enjoyed by their counterparts in the developed countries. He went on to say that three years ago, Namibia created an Efficiency and Charter Unit in his Office to begin the process of stipulating what is expected of the civil service. Over this period of three years, Namibia articulated General Principles for the Civil Service and finalized many sector-specific charters giving priority to those areas where civil service personnel are in direct contact with the citizens.

The Prime Minister then expressed his great joy to see Africa as a whole coming together to work towards articulating a Charter for the Public Service in Africa, pointing out that to review and adopt the Draft Charter in readiness for the challenges of an increasingly open and accountable environment are common objectives at the Third Biennial Pan African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service. In pursuit of these objectives, the Prime Minister stressed the need to put in place regional follow-up mechanisms and to deliberate on training and capacity-building measures at regional and national levels.

Speech by the Director of the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of United Nations, Mr. Guido Bertucci

In his statement, Mr. Bertucci, presented the conclusions and recommendations of the XVth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. He referred in particular to the recommendation that the United Nations provide support to African Governments in the development and enforcement of national public service charters, and find ways and means to support and encourage similar initiatives in other regions. Mr. Bertucci noted the rapid advances in science and technology and the effect they are having on the new expectations among women and men. This factor could be a powerful force for progress and reform. Specifically, under the impetus of technological change, governance systems would have to be radically reworked, with increasing emphasis being given to building new partnerships, promoting popular participation, forging public-private sector links, and repositioning the public service for the challenges of globalization. Mr. Bertucci further stated that these were among the issues exhaustively discussed at the XVth Meeting of Experts. According to him, the Meeting further urged the UN Member States to give importance to the role of training and to the adoption of the Charter whose significant aim was to reaffirm the primacy of the common good over particularistic interests, besides seeking to enhance the role, prestige, professionalism and overall performance of the public service.

Speech by H.E. the Chairman of the Governing Board of CAFRAD and Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reform of the Kingdom of Morocco, H.E. M'Hamed El Khalifa

In his speech, H.E. Mr. M'Hamed El Khalifa expressed his deep gratitude to the Government of Namibia for hosting the Third Biennial Pan African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service. He recalled the First and Second Pan African Conferences held in 1994 and 1998 respectively, emphasizing the importance of this forum in providing African Ministers of Civil Service an opportunity to address common problems in the area of public administration and to deliberate on the contents of a Charter for the Public Service.

By drafting this Charter, African countries had, according to the Governing Board's Chairman, sought to establish a new relationship between the public service and its environment, and by so doing, prepare the public service for the challenges of development and of the new Millennium. In his view, it is necessary to reflect on new ways of reforming the public service and enhancing its performance capacity.

In this context, the Chairman of the Governing Board spotted a major omission in previous reform efforts – particularly, the absence of the professional dimension in such efforts. He emphasized the need for professionalism right from the stage of recruitment, through that of training to that of career development.

He further highlighted the importance of the issues slated for discussion at this year's Conference: Charter implementation and regional monitoring mechanisms, public service ethics, and the role of public service training institutions.

The Chairman felt that it was essential to upgrade competencies and promote professionalism across the entire spectrum of the public service, and to substantially revise human resources management policies and recruitment practices.

The Chairman of the Governing Board seized the opportunity to inform the meeting of CAFRAD's achievements in organizing the Conference of Directors of Civil Service, the Seminar on Human Resources Management, and the joint workshop with UNDESA on Ethics in the Public Service. Through this laudable performance, the Centre had succeeded in achieving the objectives set out in the Rabat Declaration.

In conclusion, and like the previous speakers, the Chairman of the Governing Board of CAFRAD emphasized the importance of the Charter and called for its adoption.

2. SESSION I: REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE CHARTER

The Rt. Hon. Hage G Geingob, Prime Minister of Namibia was appointed Chairman of the Pan-African Conference. He thanked the Ministers for their confidence and indicated his pleasure to serve the Conference and to lead it to the achievement of its goals. The main goal was the adoption of the Charter, which would reinforce public administration systems for good governance.

Ministers discussed in detail the Draft Charter, article by article, and proposed amendments to some articles. With regard to the Preamble, it was decided that in modernizing administrative structures, emphasis should be put on communication technologies for the transformation of historical and political conditions. It was also decided to include "Ethics" in the Definitions, as standards to guide the behaviour and actions of personnel in public institutions are of great importance. This, in any case, is the focus of Article 22 on Ethics.

Other major amendments related to Article 5: Principle of Neutrality; Article 7: Principle of Continuity; Article 8: Proximity and Accessibility of Services; Article 16: Mobility and Redeployment; Article 18: Motivation; and Article 24: Conflict of Interest. The Charter for the African Public Service as amended, was then adopted. The amended Charter is attached as Annex I of the Report.

3. SESSION II: ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP AND MECHANISM FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER

Presentation on: The African Public Service Charter: Implementation Modalities, Capacity Building Implications, and Regional Follow-up Mechanisms.

Presenter: M. J. Balogun, Principal Regional Adviser, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Mr. Balogun began his presentation with a conceptual framework incorporating the main elements of a public service charter: the citizen charter, the customer service pledge, the leadership code, and the professionally oriented, employee Bill of Rights. He acknowledged the possibility of variations in approaches to charter formulation, with some countries placing more emphasis on one element than another, and other countries combining and giving equal weight to all the elements under a single charter. He is of the view that charters with limited objectives are easier to implement than those with a global reach. However, in terms of comprehensive treatment of the issue of rights and obligations, a Charter that in one single enactment addresses the concerns of the four principal stakeholders has an advantage over another that is restricted in outlook.

Against the backdrop of the conceptual framework, Balogun examined the key provisions of the Draft Charter for the African Public Service. According to him, the draft addresses the key concerns in governance and public service revitalization. However, he urged that the draft be streamlined in a way that would enable the Charter to serve the primary objectives, notably, serving as a model for countries seeking to enhance the image of public officials through the enactment and enforcement of sound ethical and professional codes of conduct as well as through the improvement of the “customer-service” orientation of government organizations.

On the specific issue of charter implementation and monitoring, Balogun outlined a four-point plan based on the issues of concern to the principal stakeholders. Besides dilating on the institutional and human capacity building implications of the plan, he advocated the establishment at the national level of Steering Committees comprising representatives of the four Focal Points, that is, civil society, the private sector and consumer bodies, the government, and the career civil service. These National Steering Committees are to be linked together under a regional coordinating and reporting arrangement.

If the National Steering Committees and the constituent Focal Points diligently pursue the objectives assigned to them, they should, according to Balogun, be able to submit periodic reports on accomplishments under the four broad headings. In particular, the framework should furnish information on how far each country has gone at a point in time in articulating and executing its Citizen Charter, drafting Customer Service Pledges and reconstituting public agencies into “customer-friendly” service delivery agents, elaborating and enforcing codes of conduct and ethics, and reshaping the public service from patronage-ridden and favour-dispensing outfits to performance- and productivity-

focused, accountable units. The institutional and human capacity building measures undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the substantive aspects of the Charter should also form part of the reports compiled by the National Steering Committees for transmission to a regional data bank.

According to Balogun, the monitoring of developments is likely to be assisted by at least two factors—recent advances in information technology, and UNDESA’s track record in the application of the technology to forge networks and bridge knowledge gaps in the field of public administration and finance. The first factor should facilitate the storage and interactive transmission and exchange of vast quantities of data. This, Balogun noted, is the philosophy underpinning the UNPAN project launched under the auspices of UNDESA-DPEPA. Following the UNPAN model it should be possible to develop an interactive process of information exchange, linked to UNPAN, around the four themes covered by the African Public Service Charter:

- *The Citizen Charter*
- *Customer Service Pledge(s)*
- *The Leadership Code*
- *Public Service Professional Code of Ethics/Conduct*

To monitor the progress attained in the implementation of the Charter at the national level, a Regional Implementation Secretariat should be established drawing on resources available within UNDESA, CAFRAD and ECA.

Comments on Mr. Balogun's presentation

Comments on the paper focused on:

- Implementation mechanisms for the Charter;
- Respective roles of UNDESA, CAFRAD, other Regional Institutions;
- Linkage with the OAU;
- Resources for implementation at National and Regional levels;
- The Windhoek Declaration.

The main proposals can be summarized as follows on the mechanisms of implementation:

- Participants agreed with Mr. Balogun’s conclusion that implementation rests with national governments and hinges on wide participation of all stakeholders.
- It was also noted that a multiplicity of institutions would be detrimental to sound implementation and would imply a waste of resources. Pooling national efforts along sub-regional economic groupings was seen as a way to save on resources and ensure maximum impact.

To respond to the main implementation challenges, it was recommended that:

- a) CAFRAD be assigned a leading role in the Charter's implementation at regional level in cooperation with all regional institutions, and in particular, OFPA and regional economic groupings.
- b) UNDESA (and UNECA) give support to CAFRAD by providing the tools for developing training materials and organizing training activities in support of the implementation of the Charter. Participants also supported the linkage with the UNPAN initiative as proposed by the resource person, Mr. Balogun.
- c) A Windhoek Declaration be issued by the 3rd Conference to highlight the adoption of the Charter and seek support for its implementation.
- d) UNDESA and CAFRAD be mandated to seek financial support from the international community and bilateral donors in support of the implementation of the Charter.
- e) The implementation of the Charter be given high priority by all the key stakeholders.

4. SESSION III: ETHICS: COMPLEMENTARY TRAINING TOOLS

Presentation on: The UNDP/DESA Regional Project on Ethics.

Presenter: Stefan Lock, Associate Expert, Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations

A presentation by Stefan Lock, addressed selected findings and recommendations of a support project for policy and programme development executed by the United Nations. The objective of this project was to assist governments in Africa to improve the management of ethics and conduct in the public service. To do this, comparative information on current legislation, policies, programmes, and practices have been compiled in order to highlight gaps and best practices which can serve as a basis to introduce new or improve on existing ethics policies and programmes. The study involved ten countries: Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda. These countries were chosen to ensure broad representation of the cultural and linguistic diversity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The aim of the study is the description of national "ethics infrastructures", a concept which is loosely based on an OECD study which has been specifically adapted to the African context. The "ethics infrastructures" are composed of mutually reinforcing functions and elements. The functions (guidance, management, and control) and the elements (political commitment, codes of conduct, professional socialization, a special

ethics coordinating body, public service work conditions, the legal framework, effective accountability mechanisms, and public involvement) need to achieve the necessary coherence and synergy to support an environment of high standards of behavior.

A central finding of the study is that in all participating countries, the issue of ethics and the management of conduct in the public service has recently been addressed in research and programme development. While it may be too early for an in-depth evaluation, the countries indicate that much has already been accomplished in the way these issues are now addressed and a forum for public discourse and programme development has been provided, particularly within the past two or three years. Mr. Lock presented some findings and recommendations in the areas of public service structure, guidance, management, control and enforcement, and the role of non-governmental actors to the Conference of Ministers.

In order to contextualise how the conduct of public servants is managed, the study tried to get a basic overview of the structure of the public service in each sample country. Based on the project findings, Mr. Lock presented the following general recommendations:

- The capacity to collect basic public service statistics should be strengthened.
- Public service salary structures (including decompression, inflation adjustment, private sector competitiveness) should be improved.

Mr. Lock's presentation next addressed aspects of guidance for the public service. Guidance, particularly the provision and implementation of values and standards, is the bedrock of public service professionalism and integrity.

Mr. Lock also addressed some issues in the management of conduct in the daily business of administration. To implement a guiding framework of public service values and standards, a management framework is necessary. Such a management framework can be provided through the designation of a specific agency to oversee overall ethics and anti-corruption policies, good public service working conditions with fair human resources policies and adequate remuneration, and clearly defined administrative policies and procedures. Based on the project's findings, general recommendations to be made in this area are:

- Fair and transparent human resources policies and practices.
- Disciplinary action upon misconduct.
- Strengthening and expansion of the disclosure system.
- Training of managers and supervisors in disciplinary procedures and measures.

The role of non-governmental actors in achieving the goal of an ethical public administration was also highlighted in Mr. Lock's presentation. In democracies where the government and the public service are ultimately accountable to the people of a country, it is very important to see what role civil society can take in demanding accountability, transparency, and integrity in its government. The issues to be addressed here include:

- Enhancement of government transparency and disclosure practices.

- Inclusion of the private sector and civil society as partners in ethics and anti-corruption policies.
- Acceptance of public reporting and oversight function of private media.
- For the press, a sense of professional responsibility to inform the public without undue bias.

Based on his presentation of project findings and recommendations, Mr. Lock explained the twofold purpose of the study, international comparison in order to identify good instruments and policies, and the provision of a national information system, that brings all the information on public service ethics regulations and policies together in a systematic way. Covering both aspects, the potential functions of the study are to provide an inventory or observatory of all existing legislation, regulation and specific policies, a documentation of progress, input for policy development and dialogue. And last but not least, the Public Service Ethics in Africa project is ready to provide a wealth of information for the development of specific training programs on public service ethics.

Comments on Mr. Lock's presentation

Participants congratulated the UN on the successful implementation of the ethics project. It was noted that whatever methodological and empirical gaps might have been discovered at the end of this preliminary effort would be taken care of when the scope of the study was broadened to include additional countries.

The need for a culture underpinning public service ethics was also underscored.

5. SESSION IV: STRATEGIC RE-ORIENTATION OF THE AFRICAN INSTITUTES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Presentation on: Preparing Public Administrators to Function in a Rapidly Changing World: New (and Not so New) Issues.

Presenter: Allan Rosenbaum, Director, Institute for Public Management and Community Service and Coordinator, Ph.D. Program in Public Administration, Florida International University

According to Dr. Rosenbaum, the past several years have witnessed a renewed and growing interest in improving the quality of governance and government in virtually every region of the world. This renewed worldwide interest in improved governance has been increasingly evident on the African continent. One manifestation of this is the commitment of the continent's Civil Service Ministers to the development of a Charter for the Public Service in Africa. The successful implementation of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa depends very heavily upon the capacity of the continent's educational and training institutions to produce civil servants and government

administrators who have the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to perform the very critical responsibilities of government in an effective and efficient manner.

To do so, it is necessary for educators and trainers to understand clearly which of the many transitions occurring in the contemporary world will most significantly impact upon the public sector and what are the implications of these changes for the training of effective public managers. Arguably, among the twelve most important of these transitions are the following:

- a) The realization that the public problems with which governments now must routinely deal have grown greatly in number and are often lacking in clear cut solutions.
- b) The considerable movement toward political democratization and the greatly increased emphasis upon accountability that has accompanied it.
- c) The emphasis upon market-based solutions to address public policy problems.
- d) The growing incorporation of norms of cultural diversity into governance.
- e) The rapidly growing interest in the decentralization of often highly centralized governments.
- f) The gradual weakening of state capacity and, in some cases, the actual disintegration of the state.
- g) The emergence of increasing pressures to implement shared responsibility for governing.
- h) The growing gap between the rich and the poor.
- i) The increasing linkage of issues of higher ethical standards and greater transparency to the improvement of governance all around the world.
- j) The emergence of new technologies, especially in the area of communications, which makes information more plentiful and valuable.
- k) The growth of multi-national integration.
- l) The rapidly growing demands for new approaches to, and styles of leadership.

Taken together, these developments generate far more intense demands upon the contemporary public servant for innovative professionalism than has ever before been the case. It seems evident that there are three general categories of abilities upon which those concerned with effective public management ought to focus their attention. These are the provision of technical, managerial and leadership skills.

The effective public manager of the future will, of necessity, need to be skilled in virtually all of the areas in which his or her predecessors traditionally have been trained. However, the dramatic growth in the complexity of public problems and the newly emerging shape of the public sector – with its somewhat greater emphasis upon entrepreneurialism, privatization, consumer or “customer” service, contracting-out and the like – will increasingly require new technical competencies which must be developed simultaneously with the more traditional ones. These include: strategic planning capability; collaborative capability; substantive policy expertise; performance

measurement skills; program development and design capability; oral and written presentation skills; and, an understanding of non-profit and private sector management.

The managerial skills of public administrators must be significantly enhanced in at least each of the following areas: understanding of individual and organizational psychology; ability to facilitate effective staff professional and personal development; capacity to build and nurture harmonious multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environments; ability to understand and effectively interact with complex external environments; enhanced information processing and analytic capability; and the ability to focus in an increasingly diffuse environment.

Whether one wishes it to be so or not, the combination of globalization and growing technological complexity place increasing demands on the leaders of public organizations for more creative and effective leadership. Among the key areas in which such efforts will need to be initiated or intensified in the near future are the following: ability to adapt rapidly to change and complexity; ethical awareness, sensitivity and commitment; enhanced self management capability; encouraging entrepreneurialism and risk-taking ability; enhancement of the ability to see situations as others see them; and democratic institution building capacity.

Presentation on: Capacity Building of Institutes of Public Administration: Lessons of Experience.

Presenter: Dr. Victor Ayeni, Representative of the Commonwealth Secretariat, London, England

The presentation by Dr. Ayeni sought to share with participants the lessons of the Commonwealth Secretariat's experience of working with institutions for the training of public officials in Africa (broadly referred to as Management Development Institutes or MDIs). Dr. Ayeni noted that the Commonwealth Secretariat's work in the area was part of its broader assistance in support of public sector reforms and public service development which underscored the role of MDIs as key partners in the international effort to turn the fortune of African public services. However, for MDIs to effectively play this role, the paper argued for a need to re-examine their organization and mode of operation in light of the changing environment of African public services.

The paper placed the issue of capacity building at the core of MDIs' concerns for the future, which must be seen against the backdrop of their experience in the recent past. Repeatedly documented commentaries on the performance of MDIs confirm that the institutions have increasingly faced difficult times and, consequently, been relegated to a position of limited influence in the human resource management process. Increasingly they are poorly funded, poorly equipped and least attractive to top quality expertise. Equally, MDIs have not always been successful in adjusting to the realities of privatization and commercialization, limiting their capacity to compete and effectively service the needs of governments and other clients. Under these circumstances, MDI's have a tough future ahead. However, in facing the future, one point that must not be lost sight of is the public sector development need that MDIs seek to serve. Indeed, if MDIs

are to survive, their operational priorities must be consistent with those of their main clients, governments.

The proposed agenda of government and by implication that of MDIs must be anchored to the following five broad themes: Developing Future Leaders; Fostering Public Service Excellence; Fostering a People-Centred Governance and Public Service; Strengthening Political and Public Service Interface; Fostering Integrity and Honesty in Public Service; Developing New Ways of Working With Other Institutions. By way of illustration, the paper concluded with a project launched recently by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Management and Training Services Division in collaboration with the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) on public service leadership training and development. The project's overarching purpose is the capacity building of educational and training institutions for the training and development of a cadre of professional public service leaders. So far, only about £250,000 has been identified for its implementation, hence the Secretariat is keen to attract additional funding. The Commonwealth Secretariat clearly understands that the problems of training institutes are wider than the project's immediate goals. However, its expectation is that the project will result in enhanced and sustainable capacity in Institutes of Public Administration and Management to train and develop new public service executives in African countries.

Comments on Session 4

- The results of privatization initiatives in developed and developing countries have been mixed at best. Clearly in some instances it makes sense but in others it is a disaster and can even be counterproductive for social and economic advancement. There have to be innovative ways to reverse the negative aspects of the process. The criteria should be the capacity of the State to deliver. However, it has to retain oversight responsibility. If nation states are not strong, they shall not be in a position to respond to the challenges of development and globalization.
- The strengthening of the state administration remains a priority for Africa in order to achieve social and economic development. The structural adjustment initiatives have generally weakened the State. Even in developed countries, there is now an understanding that some areas are best left to the State. In this context, there is indeed an urgent need to debate at the continent level about requirement for and responsiveness of training institutions to emerging challenges.
- In recent years, the issue of representative democracy and participation has lead to switching responsibility and delivery of services from elected officials to NGOs and the private sector not always for the better. Local government is seen as key to influencing and making democracy more participatory.
- More debate is needed in Africa on emerging issues derived from globalization and the gap between the haves and the have nots. New challenges have emerged which include: democracy, participation and quality of services.

- Solutions have to be home-grown, there is not a one size fits all solution. It is important to make a better use of the continent experience in specific expertise. Participants expressed their concern about the importance of the brain drain to developed countries and the need to be in a position to retain the best and brightest, especially in an environment not conducive to attractive rewards in terms of benefits and career development.
- The issue of inequality was raised and it was recognized that in order to redress this situation, there is a strong need for passing relevant legislation. Public servants play a key role by providing policy advice and commitment to pressing social and economic issues and by dealing with them. There is an increasing role for substantive policy experts in the civil service
- The complexity of the issues facing training institutions is exacerbated by conflict and instability in many African countries.
- There is a need to mobilize resources, human and financial, if sustainability of training institutions is to be ensured. Innovative approaches should be further disseminated and best practices should be publicized.
- Participants reiterated their concern for the generally poor remuneration in the public service and in training institutions to attract and retain the best. They also felt that a more systemic approach should be developed to harmonize training policies and at the same time, reduce opportunities for corruption. In this respect the adoption of the African Charter for the Public Service is a welcome progress.

Recommendations:

- Participants acknowledged that the Commonwealth and other international institutions have a role to play in improving training institutions. It was recommended that the Commonwealth should open to all countries and disseminate actively the African Charter for Public Service along with other international organizations. Support from the international community to AAPAM was also strongly urged in order to encourage professional development of policy capacity on the continent.
- It was also recommended to develop new strategies for reinventing training institutions in Africa, in particular to revise and adapt courses and programmes to make use of information technology and to promote good governance and sound management.
- The Conference requests CAFRAD to provide analysis and research through surveys or other similar activities in order to better understand the impact of new challenges on African Training Institutions as well as highlight priorities for a more systematic approach. In addition, it was recognized that values are changing in the society at large (including family, schools, civil society and capacity building organizations) and it has an impact on the fundamental values in the public service. Fundamental values have to be strengthened upstream in order to

reinforce professionalism in the public service. Training institutions have a role to play in this regard by introducing or further developing ethics training in their programmes.

- If Governments want to be consistent in their wish to strengthen the public service, they need to include the funding of their training institutions in their national budget.
- Participants recommended that training be developed to equip civil servants for the new environment of globalization in terms of flexibility and adaptability to new concepts and tasks. At the same time, leadership capacities have to be strengthened.
- Finally, participants, acknowledging that they are the best placed to identify their needs, urged African countries to tackle their own national problems through homegrown initiatives to develop effective training institutions for the public service.

6. SESSION V: DEFINITION OF A NEW TRAINING POLICY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Presentation on: New Role, Status and Organization of Training Institutes in Public Administration in Africa.

Presenter: Professor Jacques-Mariel Nzouankeu, Permanent Secretary, OFPA, Cotonou, Benin

Professor Nzouankeu's presentation stressed that training institutes of public administration may be divided into three categories: the independent institute, (rare and mostly created in the Anglophone countries); the institute integrated within universities; and the governmental institute, which are predominant in the francophone area. These governmental institutes are attached either to the Prime Minister's office, or to the Minister of Civil Service. The mission of the institute of public administration is to provide initial and in-service training, as well as to undertake research. The institutes were very effective until the eighties, when their decline began.

This decline is due to some internal dysfunctions, but also to the changing administrative environment. Indeed, despite the world crises and the phenomenon of globalization, which called for a new profile of the state, the training institute kept on training the future civil servants as if the role of the State did not and would not change. Consequently, public service employees were more and more marginalized and the institutes lost their strategic role.

The presentation concluded that the training institutes must face new challenges by adjusting themselves to the new context of globalization, modifying their curricula and modernizing their pedagogical methods.

In this regard, some proposals were outlined for the consideration of the Conference. These include those relating to the formulation of new strategic directions for the training institutes, the development of research programmes, and the strengthening of the linkages between the activities of the training institutes and the reform of the public service.

Presentation on: Renovated Pedagogical Methods and Curricula in the Training Institute of Public Administration in Africa.

Presenter: Professor Brahim Zyani, School of Public Administration (ENA), Rabat, Morocco

The presentation by Professor Zyani also called attention to the mismatch between the operations of the training institutes and the needs (as well as priorities) of the public service. Professor Zyani would, in particular like to see the institutes play an increasing role in public service capacity building and leadership development. Like Professor Nzouankeu, he noted the following weaknesses:

- a) the failure to adjust to the rapidly changing environment;
- b) the application of ineffective pedagogical approach (reflected in the bias towards the transmission of theoretical knowledge);
- c) the tendency to starve the institutes of needed resources.

Zyani's presentation therefore stressed the need to reposition the institutes for new, and increasingly complex challenges, to forge partnerships with regional and international institutions, and to strengthen the bonds with civil society. The institutes' research and consulting capacities would also need to be significantly improved.

Comments on Session 5

Based on the two presentations, the participants made the following observations:

- a) the limited impact of the training institutes is also due to the small number of civil servants that the institutes are able to train within the existing budgetary constraints;
- b) the gap between the curricula of the institutes and the day-to-day operations of the public service may be attributed to the limited exposure of the bulk of the trainers to practical public service management problems;
- c) rather than hold training institutes responsible for the problems facing the public service, it would be advisable for the public service to face these problems squarely, and take the initiative in defining its training and institutional capacity building needs;
- d) in some cases, the training programmes implemented by the institutes are so attractive to the private sector that the products of such programmes get "pouched" by the private sector.

Recommendations

Based on the preceding observations, the Conference recommended as follows:

- a) Efforts should be made to bridge the gap between the training curricula and the challenges facing the public service, and in particular to base the activities of the institutes on clearly established training needs;
- b) The training institutes should in their recruitment practices maintain a judicious balance between theoretically-oriented trainers and experienced public service practitioners;
- c) Measures should be adopted to merge regional and sub-regional institutes with complementary and/or similar mandates;
- d) Stakeholders should collaborate on efforts aimed at promoting the application of ICT, to build partnerships, close knowledge gaps, and support the process of distance learning

A paper on “Renovated Pedagogical Methods and Curricula in the Training Institutes of Public Administration” was submitted by Prof. Joseph Ayee. His paper explains that some of the most serious problems of training in developing countries are visible in training institutes of public administration in Africa. They include the following:

- Training is often treated as a discrete event, not part of an overall programme of organisational improvement;
- Many trainees are selected on the basis of bureaucratic politics and patronage rather than on the basis of the greatest need;
- Competent trainers are rare, as training is itself a poorly developed profession;
- Training curricula and models are usually based on borrowed models that are rarely updated;
- Classroom-based, academic-style teaching dominates most training programmes, raising serious questions of relevance;
- Training evaluations are usually limited to assessing happiness levels rather than the impact on knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and job performance; and
- Most training institutes are poorly financed and managed and are usually heavily dependent on government.

However, Mr. Ayee’s paper expresses no doubt that African training institutes for public administration are capable of developing their teaching programmes to meet the desired objectives of effectively improving public sector management in Africa, in spite of the weaknesses and limitations mentioned above. For the way forward in addressing present challenges for pedagogical methods and curricula in training institutes, Mr. Ayee’s paper makes three recommendations:

- Training institutes must convince their governments to undertake a major review of their training programmes and to produce training policies that lay down principles of mandatory training and retraining of all staff.
- The institutes must forge a stronger link between research, consultancy and training. This would involve updating training curricula and producing “home-grown” models and case studies.
- Regional training institutes like the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) and Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) must seek donor assistance to focus on improving indigenous African institutional and human capacity.

Mr. Ayee’s paper concludes that, in the immediate future, efforts to improve the operations of government will focus on the development of administrative skills and administrative systems. The extent to which government agencies are responsive to the public will depend on how institutes of public administration train African administrators and managers. This is seen as a demanding and arduous task that calls for a rejuvenation of pedagogical methods and curricula in the training institutes of public administration in Africa.