
1.0 Background

The quality of human resources is critical to the development of any country. Whether it is in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as agreed during the United Nations Millennium Summit, or other intergovernmental commitments such as the plan of action for sustainable development as set at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, or regional commitments such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the various development strategies formulated at every country level, it is expected that the translation of such aspirations into tangible results is in the hands of human resources. Global, regional and national commitments to sustainable development and poverty reduction need human capacities in the Public Sector to transform these commitments into results. The knowledge, know-how and skills, networks and attitudes of personnel in the Public Sector are at the heart of the performance of countries because it is through them and by them that services are planned and delivered, critical innovations conceived and realized and needed reforms carried out.

Therefore Public Sector human resource managers occupy a strategic position in the development of a country. However, in many countries, this strategic position is not recognized in the formulation of strategies and human resource managers in the public sector may not be professionally tuned to the critical role they should play. “While many governments have professional, and sometimes very prestigious, cadres or corps in some areas, with members who include graduates of elite academies……the HRM function is commonly discharged by generalist administrators, often coming under an administrative cadre, corps or similar structures….playing a restricted, bureaucratic and reactive role, confined by and large to routine decisions about staff entitlement to pay increments and the like, very many of which could be “read” off the administrative regulations governing staff behaviour … with little or no real input into strategic decisions about staff management, let alone decisions on how to achieve the overall core objectives of government”1

Clearly, for this situation to change in the Public Sector of African countries there is need to adopt a model of the HRM function which will best enable governments to manage their staff so as to achieve their key objectives. Such a model will enable HRM managers to play the roles of: (i) Strategy expert; (ii) Work organization expert, (iii) Employee champion, and (iv) Agent of continuous transformation as advisers on change management processes, such as the stages that a public agency should go through when it implements a skills development programme. In order for HRM managers to play these roles effectively they will need to be specialists, advisers, and

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1 See United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Unlocking the Human Potential for Public Sector Performance: World Public Sector Report 2005: (United nations, New York, www.unpan.org)
consultants very conversant in all aspects of HRM. They will need to have both a solid understanding of the environment in which the organization operates and the ability to deliver services efficiently. Governments will need to invest in the training of their own administrators or appoint HRM specialists from the outside, if needed, in order to manage the staff effectively. HRM specialists also need to be taken as serious strategic partners by senior officials and politicians if they aspire to influence the strategic management of human resources in the public sector.

To achieve these ideals, the sharing of knowledge and insights amongst African Public Sector HRM professionals is regarded as imperative. Although a thorough scoping exercise has not yet been conducted there appears to be a lack of a continental network dedicated to human resource management. It is believed that the establishment of such a network would contribute in no small measure to the promotion of the development of sound human resource management capacity throughout the African continent. The primary objective with the establishment of such a network will be to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, information, best practices, and capacity building amongst African Public Sector HR Management professionals. Given the centrality of human resources to effective Public Sector service delivery, the benefits that such a network could have for African public services are numerous.

2.0 Objectives of the African Public Sector HRM Networking Association

The overall objective of African Public Sector HRM Network will be to provide human resource managers in the public sector in Africa with a networking platform for advocacy, human resources management professional development, information and knowledge sharing to enhance organizational and individual capacity for effective performance in the public sector.

The Network will:

i. Promote excellence, integrity and professional standards in the practice of Human Resource Management in the Public Sector
ii. Identify and share best practices in Human Resource Management so as to assist public sector organizations improve their performance in HRM and public service in general.
iii. Provide Human Resource Management practitioners in the Public Sector in Africa with tools, models, skills, methods, and data to improve the effectiveness of their human resource management and development programs.
iv. Promote continuous learning, enhance knowledge, improve skills, and develop the next generation of human resource professionals and leaders in the public sector in Africa. In pursuance of this objective establish a system aimed at the certification of HR professionals in partnership and/or collaboration with Management Development Institutes in Africa.
v. Support and advocate for the strategic positioning of Human Resource Managers as prominent and essential partners in public service development planning and management.
vi. Support continental and Regional efforts in Africa to implement harmonized Public Service commitments such as the Charter for Public Service in Africa.
3.0 Activities

The core activities of the African Public Sector HR Network will be as follows.

i. Research, documentation and information dissemination on human resource management in the Public Sector in Africa
ii. Education, training and professional development of human resource managers in the Public sector in Africa through conferences, seminars and workshops
iii. Organization for certification for human resource managers in the public sector to contribute to their professionalization
iv. Publications
v. Networking nationally, regionally and internationally for developing the capacity and profession of human resource management in Africa’s Public Sector Institutions
vi. Providing advisory services to governments and other public organizations in various aspects of human resource management

4.0 Membership

(i) Individual Membership

Any individual good standing in the community whose profession and activities serve to promote the interests and objectives of the African Public Sector HR Network is eligible to join as an individual member.

(ii) Corporate Membership

Any institution, organization, association whose purposes and activities are in consonance with the objectives of the African Public Sector HR Network is eligible to join as a corporate member.

Membership shall be open to Human Resource Management Departments in Ministries of Public Service in Africa and in other Public organizations to be corporate Members.

(iii) Honorary Membership

The African Public Sector HR Network may confer honorary membership and/or fellowship upon any individual who has made distinguished contribution to Human Resource Management in Africa.

5.0 Structure and Organization of the African Public Sector HRM Network

It is proposed that the African Public Sector HR Networking Association will have three governing organs namely, The General Assembly, The Council and The Executive Committee.

i. The general Assembly
The General Assembly, which is the supreme body of the African Public Sector HRM Network will set the overall policy, elect the Council and the Executive Committee. The assembly will elect a President for a period to be determined.

ii. The Council

The Council will determine the general policy matters.

iii. The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee headed by the President as elected, shall manage the African Public Sector HRM Network. This may exercise all powers of the African Public Sector HRM Network as are directed by its Constitution.

iv. The Secretariat

There will be the Secretariat which coordinates the activities of the Organization. This means that the Headquarters of African Public Sector HRM Network will be run by a Secretariat which is headed by the Secretary-General and assisted by different officers such as a Programme Officer, a Finance Officer and the Secretarial Staff.

6.0 Resources

The funds of the African Public Sector HRM Network shall be obtained from membership fees, contributions, donations, levies and from income generating activities as approved by the Executive Committee.

7.0 Registration

It is proposed that the African Public Sector HRM Network will be registered as a non-profit making organization.