

**DESA *Public Service Ethics in Africa* Project
Synopsis***

Between 1999 and 2001, the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) conducted a comparative study on Public Service Ethics in Africa, funded by the Regional Bureau for Africa of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Scope and Aim of the Study

The study involves 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 selection of countries was based on a consultation process between DESA, the UNDP country offices and the national governments.

The overall aim of the study is to assist African governments to improve the management of ethics and conduct in their public services. For this purpose, comparative information on current legislation, policies, programmes and practices was compiled, to highlight gaps and practices, which can serve as a basis to introduce new or improve existing ethics policies and programmes at the national level.

Methodology

The conceptual framework of this study is the description of the specific “ethics infrastructure” in each country: set of rules, institutions and practices that are in place to guide, manage and enforce good conduct in the public sector. This concept was initially developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but was modified by DESA in order to be able to reflect the African context.

The research design for the study is a combination of expert interviews and document analysis. The research process at the country level, conducted by national consultants, was supported/guided by a detailed standardized questionnaire and research guidelines developed by DESA. The questionnaire focused mostly on publicly available statistics, administrative data, and legal documents. In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the data gathered as well as the participation of regional and national stakeholders in the research process, the project was advised by a Project Steering Group.

Current Status:

- ❑ Internet website (<http://www.unpan.org/ethics>) with overviews, downloads of project documents, and links.
- ❑ Project report in two volumes: Volume 1 with comparative overview published, and Volume 2 with individual country reports currently under finalization.
- ❑ Database on survey data available upon request.
- ❑ Consultative meetings on possible follow-up action at the country level scheduled for 2001.

* See <http://www.unpan.org/ethics> for full documentation.

Synopsis of Findings and Recommendations:

Findings	Recommendations
Government Employment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Access to public service employment data is in many countries highly limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthen capacity to collect basic public service statistics.
Public Sector Salaries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lowest and highest nominal income are often very close to each other. <input type="checkbox"/> Seven countries reported that salaries have been paid regularly. Only South Africa described that public service salaries kept up with inflation and in parity with private sector salaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Improve public sector salary structures, where appropriate, by introducing decompression, inflation adjustment and competitiveness with the private sector.
Identification and Provision of Values and Standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All ten countries reported having public service-wide statements of core values. The most common values are: impartiality/neutrality/financial disinterestedness; honesty/integrity; equality; fairness/justice; selflessness; accountability; dedication/diligence; discretion; efficiency; and transparency. 	
Communication of Values and Standards	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Few countries offer continuous training and regular reminder activities for their public servants in this area. <input type="checkbox"/> Only three countries indicated that the values and standards relevant to the work of their public servants are given to them individually and in printed form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous communication of values and standards, and continuous training in public service ethics.
Restrictions on Conduct	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Restrictions regarding the conduct of the members of the public service are in place for most countries. <input type="checkbox"/> The acceptance of gifts, fees or payments, unauthorized use of official property or use of official information and political engagement are usually covered. <input type="checkbox"/> Some traditional concerns like inappropriate employment and/or supervision of family members are insufficiently addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate employment and/or supervision of family members needs to be addressed more explicitly. Inappropriate employment of family and friends should be important targets for reform in many participating countries. <input type="checkbox"/> Current standards in many countries do not sufficiently address new areas of concern such as official travel, movement to the private sector, post employment and lobbying. It is recommended that national governments in Africa observe further developments in these areas and prepare appropriate regulations.
Integrity Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Six countries indicated the existence of a specific national integrity strategy. <input type="checkbox"/> Less than half of the countries were able to indicate whether they had established routines for risk assessment, systematic policy analysis and evaluation mechanisms in their coordination of ethics and anti-corruption measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> More policy and impact analysis in the field of management activities for the enhancement of ethical values and standards in the public sector.

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Findings	Recommendations
Human Resources Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ While appropriate regulatory provisions seem to be in place, they are often not translated satisfactorily into daily action.❑ Relevant management tools such as the identification and reporting of conflicts-of-interest in various areas, service standards, and anti-corruption provisions in bidding procedures are usually provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Disciplinary measures and sanctions need to be enforced in daily administrative practice.❑ Appropriate training of managers and supervisors in disciplinary procedures and measures should be encouraged.
Disclosure Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ All countries reported that previous employment has to be declared.❑ Less than half of the participating countries reported that loans and outside positions are covered by disclosure requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Need to strengthen and expand disclosure systems.
Internal Reporting Procedures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Nine countries indicated that public servants have an obligation to report or “blow the whistle” on wrongdoing.❑ Six countries indicated the availability of protection for those public servants reporting wrongdoing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Need to simplify reporting procedures, both internally for public servants and externally for the general public.❑ Governments should provide sufficient protection for public servants willing to report misconduct.
Public Complaints Mechanisms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Seven countries confirmed that they have public complaints procedures.❑ The institution of Ombudsman, Public Defender, or the Inspector General was the most frequently mentioned agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Need to simplify reporting procedures, both internally for public servants and externally for the general public.❑ Need to strengthen capacity of external agencies, such as the Ombudsman, Inspector General.
Role of Non-Governmental Actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Transparency in sharing information about public sector activities is acknowledged to ranging degrees in most countries.❑ The survey indicates that in many countries the press is still not entirely free to express its views or operate without government interference.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Governments need to enhance their transparency and disclosure requirements.❑ The private sector and civil society should be included as partners in ethics and anti-corruption policies.❑ Public administrations need to accept the public reporting and oversight function of private media.

Contact:

Ms. Elia Yi Armstrong
Project Coordinator
Phone: +1-212-963-2926
Fax: +1-212-963-2916
E-mail: armstronge@un.org

Mr. Stefan Lock
Associate Expert
Phone: +1-212-963-4533
Fax: +1-212-963-2916
E-mail: lock@un.org