

**29TH AAPAM ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE, MBABANE, SWAZILAND, 3 – 7 SEPTEMBER
2007**

CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

The 29th Roundtable Conference of the **African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)** was hosted by the Government of the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland. It was organized by AAPAM in conjunction with the Swaziland National Organizing Committee (NOC). Three hundred and twenty (320) delegates from nineteen (19) countries participated in the Roundtable. They included Cabinet Ministers, Heads of Public Services and Secretaries to Cabinet, Permanent/Principal Secretaries and other high ranking Government Officials, Chairpersons and Commissioners of Public Service Commissions and other appointing Commissions, Heads of Management Development Institutes, representatives of Statutory Institutions and international organizations as well as renowned scholars and academics. The countries represented at the Roundtable included Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, The Gambia, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Malawi, Mauritius, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, United Kingdom, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. International organizations and AAPAM development partners represented at the Roundtable included the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), and the Commonwealth Secretariat, London.

The 29th Roundtable was a continuation of the tradition dating back to 1978 of holding AAPAM Annual conferences in different member countries with each conference addressing issues of contemporary relevance and concern based on the experiences of policy makers, senior public officials, corporate and civic leaders, and renowned public administration and management scholars. The Conference also strengthened the AAPAM Young Professionals Programme which was started in 2005, of involving young public servants in the African Public Services in the conference deliberations as a way of promoting their professional development through inter-generational knowledge transfer and the sharing of learning experiences.

A new AAPAM initiative was launched at the Conference whereby organizations in member countries submitted reports on innovations related to improving service delivery and organizational performance in the public sector. The innovations were subjected to a review by a Jury appointed by the AAPAM Executive Committee which, through a rigorous process of evaluations and interviews, selected the winners. The best three finalists received the AAPAM Award for Innovative Management of the Gold, Silver and Bronze categories while two other finalists were presented with trophies in recognition of their initiatives in creating innovations in their organizations.

Yet in another high profile innovative initiative, the first AAPAM Gold Medal was awarded to Professor Adebayo Adedeji in recognition of his exemplary leadership in Public Administration and Development Management in Africa. The details of this prestigious award shall be included in the main Conference Report.

The 29th AAPAM Roundtable Conference was held over five days at the Royal Swazi Sun Convention Centre in Ezulwini Valley, Mbabane from 3rd to 7th September, 2007. The theme of the Conference was **Political and Managerial Leadership for Change and Development in Africa** whose specific objectives were to:

- i. Appraise delegates with recent scholarship and key elements in leadership effectiveness;
- ii. Examine the relative and complementary roles of the political and bureaucratic/managerial leadership in nation building;
- iii. Examine the lessons presented by countries that have undertaken major positive change towards development in recent times, both in Africa and elsewhere, and the role played by leadership in these changes;
- iv. Provide a platform for the exchange of views between invited political and senior public sector managers in Africa;
- v. Examine best practices as well as lessons learnt from cases of failed political and managerial leadership;
- vi. Discuss a possible agenda for improving leadership quality and effectiveness, including enhanced elected-bureaucratic leadership interface; and.
- vii. Explore ways of strengthening leadership capacity development in the African public services.

The Roundtable was organized around five sub-themes namely:

- i. Leading issues in Political and Bureaucratic leadership and their roles in change management at both institutional and national development levels.
- ii. Overview of the Experience of the Role of Leadership in Newly Industrialized Countries and Emergent African Countries
- iii. The Practice of Political and Bureaucratic leadership in Africa.
- iv. Lessons and Country Experiences.
- v. Agenda for improving leadership quality and effectiveness.

The Conference was officially opened by His Excellency Absalom Themba Dlamini, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland. The opening ceremony was also graced by other dignitaries, including Hon. Sgayoyo C. Magongo, Minister of Public Service and Information, Mr. Sandile B. Ceko, Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Public Service and who was the Chief Host; Ms. Ann Masson, Director, International Programmes, Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC); Dr. John-Mary Kauzya, Chief of Branch, Governance and Public Administration, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), New York; Mrs Oluwatoyin A. Job, Adviser (West Africa) who

represented the Director, Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and Mr. John Mitala, President of AAPAM, Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Public Service, Republic of Uganda.

At the beginning of the opening ceremony, messages of solidarity were received from AAPAM Development Partners and were delivered by the following:

- (i) Ms. Ann Masson, Institute of Public Administration of Canada, IPAC
- (ii) Mrs Oluwatoyin A. Job, Commonwealth Secretariat, London
- (iii) Dr. John-Mary Kauzya, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), New York.

The Chief Host, Mr. Sandile Ceko, Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Public Service, welcomed AAPAM to the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland. He noted that Swaziland last hosted the AAPAM Roundtable in 1991 under the theme, **Ethics and Accountability in the African Public Services**. He noted further that, over time, the Roundtable Conferences have resumed to attract increasingly the Heads of Public Services as was the case in the early days of AAPAM. He appreciated the fact that this time around many Heads of Public Services, Chairpersons of Public Service Commissions and other appointing Commissions, Permanent/Principal Secretaries and high ranking Government officials from all over Africa were in attendance at the Roundtable.

Mr. John Mitala, President of AAPAM and Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet, Uganda thanked the Government of the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland for hosting the 29th AAPAM Roundtable Conference and the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister for agreeing to officially open the conference. In addition, he thanked the AAPAM development partners and the African Governments for various contributions, material and financial support extended to AAPAM over time which have strengthened the Association and made it possible for it to implement its programmes.

The Minister for Public Service and Information, Government of the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland, Hon. S.C. Magongo, also made some welcoming remarks and reminded participants that during the video communication that he made to participants at the Arusha Roundtable Conference on 8th December 2006, he promised that if they came to Swaziland they would “taste” the best of the country. Now that they were in the country he reaffirmed what he had promised. He then invited the Guest of Honour to give his address and open the conference.

In his opening speech, the Prime Minister expressed his pleasure to have been given the honor and privilege of officiating at the opening of the important AAPAM annual event. He also thanked AAPAM for giving the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland a second opportunity to host the Roundtable Conference, having hosted it once in 1991.

The Prime Minister noted that Africa faced major developmental challenges. The most prominent of these included extreme poverty and hunger, low levels of basic education for the population, high infant, child and maternal mortality, gender inequality and HIV/AIDS pandemic.

For Africa to address these challenges successfully would require strong leadership at both the political and managerial levels.

He applauded AAPAM for its contribution in addressing these challenges over a period of more than thirty years since it was founded and urged the Association to continue those efforts. In this connection he commended the timely decision by the AAPAM leadership to devote this year's Roundtable Conference on the theme: **Political and Managerial Leadership for Change and Development in Africa**. The Prime Minister urged participants to explore key elements of effective leadership at both the political and managerial level and how these have been harnessed in other parts of the world to make them contribute to accelerated and positive change and development.

Following the official opening, the Roundtable proceeded to hold the first plenary session at which Her Excellency the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister, Ms. Constance Simelane, gave a Keynote Address which generated a lot of interesting discussions.

Subsequently, nine other plenary sessions were held during the week at which papers were presented by public administration practitioners, academics and researchers. All presentations were followed by serious discussions and debates.

In addition to the ten plenary sessions, participants were given an opportunity to hold more in-depth discussions on aspects of the main theme in Working Groups sessions. The AAPAM Young Professionals also held separate in-depth discussions pertaining to their areas of concern and the experiences that they were deriving from the conference.

The Reports emanating from the discussions of the three Working Groups and the meetings of the Young Professionals were presented to and deliberated upon by the delegates at a plenary during the last day of the conference.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The main Conclusions and Recommendations arising out of the group work as well as the final deliberations in the plenary were as follows:

- i. The conference noted that Africa continues to face a leadership crisis, which to a significant extent was responsible for the persistence of the present day underdevelopment and backwardness in the continent as compared to countries elsewhere in Asia and Latin America that were at the same level of development at the time many countries in Africa attained independence. To move forward, therefore, efforts should be directed towards improving leadership capacities at both the political and managerial levels.
- ii. While the Leadership crisis in Africa may historically be blamed on colonialism and the unwillingness of the colonial regimes to develop leadership among the colonized people both at political and managerial levels, the situation has been made worse by the inadequate attention that has been given to leadership development since independence. This is particularly so with regard to the lack of training of political leaders.
- iii. On the training of political leaders, the conference noted that this should be given top priority and resources made available for that purpose. The conference was made aware of the fact that some countries had, over the last ten years, instituted measures for training politicians in leadership skills to develop their capacities, especially following the installation of new

- iv. The conference noted that in many countries, the relations between the political and administrative leadership tend to be conflictual and tense. As a result, the policy-making and policy-implementation processes became problematic and ineffective. The conference agreed that this state of affairs was not healthy and that both sides of the leadership divide should find ways of minimizing such conflicts.
- v. The conference noted that the human resource management functions continued to be taken as clerical/operational functions in the public services. This tends to downplay the critical strategic role which the human resource play in organizational performance. There is need for countries to accord this function a higher status and develop some specific training for the cadres responsible for this function. In that regard the conference commended the efforts that were being spearheaded by the United Nations to launch an initiative for strengthening and professionalizing the management of the Human Resource function in governments. This initiative should be encouraged and supported as a key component or a network operating under the auspices of AAPAM.
- vi. The conference noted that there were serious leadership crises at the local government levels, both political and managerial. These crises need to be addressed through training and development initiatives with the centre leading the process and making resources available. AAPAM should find occasion to bring this issue to the attention of the Public Service Commissions and Heads of Public Service.
- vii. The conference further noted that, as governments cede some of their functions to executive agencies, the private sector, civil society in order for them to concentrate on policy development, they will need to develop greater capacity to supervise, monitor and regulate these organizations. Unfortunately, not much effort is being put into strengthening governments in that regard. As a matter of urgency efforts should be directed in that area.
- viii. The conference noted that the HIV/AIDS scourge is decimating human capital in African public services and therefore creating a crisis for governance and service delivery. Governments should take steps to take stock of the impact of HIV/AIDS on numbers, skills, etc within the public service and take appropriate action. This should include developing HIV/AIDS work place interventions and programmes and implementing them.
- ix. The conference noted further that the AAPAM tradition of sharing experiences on developments and innovations in African public administrations, informed both by practitioners as well as research conducted by academics, needs to be continued, nurtured and strengthened.

Acknowledgements

AAPAM is most appreciative of the Government of the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland for hosting the 29th AAPAM Roundtable Conference. Besides providing high class facilities and logistics support, it also extended generous hospitality to the delegates. The fact that the conference was opened by His

Excellency the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, underscored the importance which the government attached to the conference. For this the AAPAM fraternity will ever be most grateful to His Majesty, King Mswati III and his Government.

AAPAM wishes to extend its appreciation to the Chief Host, Mr. Sandile Ceko, Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet, Government of Swaziland. Special thanks go to the National Organizing Committee, the Secretariat of the Conference, the Rapporteurs including the Rapporteur General who worked longer hours to make the conference successful. All local sponsors that pooled resources together to support the conference are highly appreciated.

Last but not least, AAPAM wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to its international development partners especially, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

Delegates will for ever remember the hospitality of the Swazi people and their cultural and tourist attractions. To the delegates, the **Umhlanga Reed Dance** Ceremony was as refreshing and captivating event as it was a treasured reincarnation of the African culture.

For all that we say: “SIYABONGA”.

Mbabane, Swaziland
7th September 2007.