

**AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND
MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)**

32nd AAPAM Roundtable Conference

Conference Communiqué



**Repositioning the African Public Services for the Realization of the
National Visions**

Drafted 18 November 2010

INTRODUCTION

The 32st Roundtable Conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) was co-hosted and organized by the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the APAM-SA at the Elangeni Hotel in Durban, South Africa from 15th to 19th November 2010.

Three Hundred and Sixty Four (364) delegates from twenty seven (27) countries attended the Conference. Among the participants were Cabinet Ministers; Heads of Public/Civil Services and Secretaries to Cabinet; Permanent/Principal Secretaries and other high ranking Government Officials; Chairpersons and Commissioners of Public Service Commissions; Heads of Management Development Institutes; Development Partners; representatives of Statutory Institutions; scholars and researchers. The delegates also included fifteen (15) AAPAM Young Professionals.

The countries represented at the Roundtable included Botswana, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Egypt, Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Roundtable Conference was also privileged to have representatives of AAPAM Partner Organizations namely, African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), the Commonwealth Secretariat London, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The AAPAM Awards, recognizing innovations in the public sector, were awarded to the six finalist organizations, namely from Tanzania (Gold), Kenya (Silver) and Mauritius (Bronze) while the three organizations from Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania received Glass Trophies.

The theme of the 32nd Annual Roundtable Conference was “***Repositioning the African Public Services for the Realization of the National Visions***”: whose sub-themes were:

- a) Critical Review of the Development Planning Efforts of the Early Post-independence period
- b) Comparison of First Generation Development Planning with Contemporary Strategic Visioning process in and across Africa countries: Lessons Learnt and Mistakes Repeated
- c) Aligning National Development Visions and Priorities with Parallel External Initiatives, Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward
- d) Building a New Strategic-Oriented Personality for African Development: Focus on Ethical, Attitudinal and Behavioural Prerequisites
- e) National Strategic Visions and the African Public Administration
- f) Lessons Learnt from National Strategic Visioning: Some Case Studies of Non-African Experiences
- g) Systems: Focus on Critical Capacity and Success Factors
- h) Country Case Studies

The overall objective of the 32nd Roundtable was to focus attention on the unique responsibilities that strategic visioning places on national public administration systems. To achieve this overall objective, participants:

- a) Compared the development planning experience of the early post-independence period with the strategic visions formulated in recent years at global, regional, and national levels, paying particular attention to differences and similarities as well as the lessons learnt so far;
- b) Examined the implications of implementing national strategic visions *simultaneously* with global and regional initiatives such as the MDGs, NEPAD, and sub-regional economic communities’ protocols on free movement of persons, goods and capital, and proffered realistic answers to the attendant

questions of overlap, duplication, resource spread, loss of focus and haziness/distortion of vision;

- c) Reviewed country experiences in the design of instruments for the management of systemic change and measurement of progress. Based on assessment of strengths and weaknesses, recommended appropriate improvements in existing change management and monitoring mechanisms;
- d) Focused attention on the leadership, policy analysis, data gathering, archiving, legal drafting, and other technical/professional capacity gaps that the public service needs to effectively backstop the national strategic visions alongside parallel but external initiatives;
- e) Reflected on the elements of policies and strategies that would most effectively develop the capacities of human resources in the public sector to enable African countries to implement development strategies effectively.

OFFICIAL OPENING

The 32nd Roundtable Conference was officially opened by **Hon. Masenyani Richard Baloyi**, Minister for Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa.

Messages of solidarity were received from AAPAM development partners and were delivered by the following:

- Ms. Wynne Young, President of the Institute of Public Administration Canada (IPAC)
- Ms Janet Kathyola for the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Dr. John-Mary Kauzya, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
- Prof. Gelase Mutahaba, on behalf of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

Mr. Kenny Govender, the Acting Director General of the Department of Public Service and Administration, South Africa welcomed delegates and invited the President of AAPAM to

address the Conference. In his opening statement, the AAPAM President, Mr. Tlohang Sekhamane, who is also Government Secretary, Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet, Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, extended a warm welcome to all delegates attending the 32nd AAPAM Conference. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to the people and Government of South Africa for accepting to co-host the 32nd AAPAM Conference with the APAM-SA chapter.

The President also thanked the resource persons and acknowledged with appreciation the continuing support of its partners, particularly the African Governments, CIDA, IPAC, Commonwealth Secretariat, UNDP and ACBF. He noted that some African Governments have increased their financial support to AAPAM.

The President singled out for gratitude the local National Organizing Committee and the AAPAM Secretariat for their dedication and commitment in organizing the Conference. The President concluded his remarks by congratulating the Republic of South Africa for the finesse, style and efficiency with which they organised the FIFA World Cup event. The success of this World Class event, he said, had made Africa proud.

Mr. Michael Mabuyakhulu, MEC Tourism and Economic Development welcomed delegates to Durban and wished them a happy stay. He said that there is a pressing need to devise innovative solutions to address the many challenges African governments are currently grappling with. He said that public servants are administration soldiers that have to ensure that governments are victorious in the fight against developmental challenges. He encouraged delegates to take time off and explore the many tourist attractions that Durban has on offer.

In his opening address, the Guest of Honour, **Hon. Masenyani Richard Baloyi**, Minister for Public Service and Administration extended a warm welcome to delegates and invited them to take advantage of the attractions of Durban. He took delegates through the past six successful AAPAM Roundtable Conferences and noted that discussions at all those conferences centred on public service and administration, performance, service delivery

and working together. The Minister applauded AAPAM for the choice of the 32nd Round Table theme. The theme, he said, raised important issues relating to planning and visioning.

Minister Baloyi noted that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was an important tool in the realization of Africa's visions. He added that the APRM, as a research intensive process and being a highly consultative process, can greatly benefit from AAPAM'S think tank capability, thereby infusing new levels of capacity to this effort.

The Minister called on AAPAM to move towards the creation of high calibre cadres that will reposition the African public service to meet the numerous challenges of the 21st century. He said that in the current global economic environment, Africa needs an innovative public administration to help resolve the many service delivery challenges the continent is confronted with. The Minister also called on AAPAM to review the model of country chapters to ensure greater representativity at local level. The Minister wished delegates successful deliberations during the course of the conference.

CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

The official opening was followed by the Keynote address by **Prof. Richard Levin**. This was followed by presentation of papers and discussions in nine plenary sessions which were rich in content and recommendations. The presentations were characterised by a vibrancy of exchanges and intense probing. Delegates made informative contributions.

In addition to the nine plenary sessions, the AAPAM Young Professionals held separate in-depth discussions pertaining to their areas of interest and the lessons they were learning from the conference.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main conclusions and recommendations arising out of the plenary were as follows:

1. That while it has been reported that Africa has been experiencing a steady economic growth, this positive development has had little impact on majority of people's

standard of living. For that reason it was acknowledged that there is need to develop strategies to translate the economic growth into improved standards of living. In this regard the public service has a key role to play.

2. Acknowledged that African countries have taken appropriate steps to develop nation visions to guide their development. There was general agreement that for visions to succeed the following issues need to be taken into account: plans to be developed through wide consultation to ensure buy-in and ownership, participatory, include blue prints and implementation mechanisms that are well articulated with medium term plans for their realization.
3. Stressed that although Africa had developed visions, these were bedevilled by a number of challenges, including poor co-ordination of resources and efforts, poor budgeting, lack of monitoring and evaluation and undue dependence on donor funding.
4. Agreed that with regard to the need for a consultative process and buy-in, the interaction between the politician and administrative leadership is critical in drawing up the national vision.
5. Identified five key principles for achieving the national vision; namely responsibility and accountability, interactive processes for comprehensive involvement, clear communication, innovation and research & development. More importantly, strong leadership at Administrative and Political level must be in place.
6. Observed that traditional approaches to realising the national visions need to be re-examined. It suggested that national visions can benefit from an entrepreneurial approach to public administration. Cautioned that entrepreneurship was not a once-off activity, but rather a process of identifying opportunities.

7. Noted that many African governments are decentralizing functions and responsibilities to local government levels without human and financial resources. Recommended that as governments transfer responsibilities and functions to the local level, they should also transfer human and financial resources.
8. Acknowledged the reality that leaders tend to stay in office beyond the term of office. Suggested the need for intergenerational succession planning. Further suggested that concerted efforts be directed at youth and human resource development.
9. Stressed that Africans have developed a practice where accountability is not demanded of those in leadership. Agreed that developmental democracy must respect people's rights, ensure accountability and demonstrate responsible leadership.
10. Noted that during the last decade most African countries have, in the course of implementing public service reforms, taken steps to improve the management of human resources in the public service with the view to realising the national visions. Nevertheless, there were still major challenges in the manner in which the human resources function was managed. The challenges include: core vises contingent staff, how to manage equity, skills development and training, performance management, pay progression and hiring and retention strategies, optimal utilization of existing capacity. To address these challenges the Conference recommended that African governments develop coherent human resource management policies, strategies, processes and systems. AAPAM in collaboration with HRMNET should continue to provide a forum for continued dialogue, sharing of experiences among member countries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Conference extended its profound gratitude to AAPAM's partners, especially IPAC, UNDESA, and Commonwealth Secretariat for supporting its 32nd Roundtable Conference.

Delegates expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of South Africa, the National Organising Committee, the Management and Staff of Sun Hotels Elangeni, the people of South Africa for their hospitality and expert handling of delegates excursions. They also expressed appreciation to the Provincial Government, the Ethekwini Municipality, as well as the various local artists for entertaining the delegates.

The delegates extended their thanks to the AAPAM leadership and Secretariat as well as the resource persons and rapporteurs for their dedication and commitment to making the 32nd Roundtable Conference a success.

Delegates were pleased to know that the 33rd Roundtable Conference will be held in October 2011 at the invitation of the Malawian Government and will focus on the theme: **“Strengthening Citizen Engagement through Decentralization to Enhance Public Service Delivery in Africa”**.

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA

19TH NOVEMBER 2010