

33rd AAPAM Round Table Conference



Conference Communiqué



**Cross-Roads hotel, Lilongwe, Malawi
18 November 2011**

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1. The 33rd Roundtable Conference of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) was co-hosted and organized by the Government of the Republic of Malawi and the AAPAM-Malawi chapter in conjunction with the AAPAM Secretariat at the Cross-Roads Hotel in Lilongwe, Malawi from 14th to 18th November 2011. The theme of the 33rd Annual Roundtable Conference was “: **Strengthening Citizen Engagement through Decentralization to Enhance Public Service Delivery in Africa**”:
2. In discussing the theme of the conference, the following sub-themes guided the discussions:
 - a) Decentralization and Citizens’ Engagement: Theoretical and Conceptual Perspectives
 - b) Policy and Legal Frameworks for Efficacious and Effective Decentralization
 - c) Decentralization in Africa: Assessing the Record since Independence
 - d) Decentralization, Citizens’ Participation and Empowerment
 - e) Decentralized Governance and Fiscal Issues
 - f) Managing Human Resource in a Decentralized Context
 - g) Linking Decentralization to Local Good Governance, Service Delivery, and Poverty Reduction
 - h) Remaining Questions and Future Directions
 - i) Country Case Studies
3. The Conference proceeded with eight plenary and four concurrent sessions
4. 365 delegates from twenty nine (29) 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 Commission’s; Heads of Management Development Institutes. The Roundtable Conference was also privileged to have representatives of AAPAM Partner Organizations namely, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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(UNDESA), the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), the Commonwealth Secretariat, London and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Capacity Development Fund (UNCDF). Others were Development Partners; representatives of Statutory Institutions; scholars and researchers. The delegates also included 30 AAPAM Young Professionals.

5. The AAPAM Gold Medal Awards for distinction and exceptional achievement in public administration and management in Africa was awarded to Prof. Malcolm Wallis of the Durban University of Technology. Awards in recognition of innovations in the public sector were awarded to the five finalists namely from the South African Independent Electoral Commission (**Gold**), Area-wide melon fly control with environmental friendly techniques (**Silver**) Mauritius and Our People Our Pride (**Bronze**) Malawi, while the two Glass Trophies went to Mauritius on e – service at the companies division and Kenya on community learning information centres.
6. The Conference was declared open by His Excellency Ngwazi Prof. Bingu Wa Mutharika who was represented by the Speaker of the Malawian Parliament Right Hon. Henry Chimunthu Banda.
7. During the 33rd Roundtable Conference, a new President Mr. Abdon Agaw Jok Nhial, the Head of Public Service in the Government of South Sudan and a Deputy President in the person of Mr. Bright Msaka the Chief Secretary of the Malawian Government. Five Vice Presidents representing regions were also elected.

OBSERVATIONS

8. The conference provided opportunity to review experiences and therefore provide a platform for learning and mutual sharing of experiences
9. The Conference noted the following:
 - 9:1 Countries are at different stages of decentralization in Africa
 - 9:2 Lack of clarity in legislative and policy framework is a hindrance to implementation of decentralization

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- 9:3 Decentralization in many countries is impeded by both political and bureaucratic will on a sustained basis, fiscal and human constraints and an absence of clear roles for traditional leaders and local councils
- 9:6 Where predictable and transparent revenue sources for devolved bodies are clearly established, decentralization has made progress
10. The Conference Acknowledged the following:
- 10:1 Decentralization is closely connected to democratic governance and service delivery
 - 10:2 In many countries, there is a disjuncture between constitutional and legal framework and the actual decentralization practice
 - 10:3 that country context is important in defining the policy framework and the progress of decentralization
11. The Conference made the following Recommendations:
- 11:1 A need for articulating set of indicators for determining progress of decentralization by each country in Africa. AAPAM should engage its partners to develop and assist countries to adopt these indicators
 - 11:2 Countries should ensure that financial and human resource devolution accompanies functional devolution. As much as possible it also helps if such transfers are constitutionally and legislatively protected
 - 11:3 that AAPAM should collaborate with partners to develop a network for supporting public administration and local government as a matter of high priority
12. The Conference concluded that AAPAM should act as a catalyst for moving these recommendations into implementation by assisting member states
13. Delegates expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Malawi; the National Organising Committee and the people of Malawi for their generous hospitality.

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14. Delegates were invited to the 34th Roundtable Conference which will to be held in **Zanzibar in October 2012** in the United Republic of Tanzania under the proposed theme; ***Performance Management for Improving Public Service Delivery in Africa.*** Delegates thanked the United Republic of Tanzania for the invitation.

**Done at Lilongwe, Malawi
On 18 November 2011**

