

REPORT ON THE EIGHTH ANNUAL SEMINAR

SEMINAR THEME: " A FOCUS ON AFRICA'S STATE FRAGILITY AND RESILIENCE TO EXOGENOUS SHOCKS AND DISASTERS - SUSTAINABILITY, GROWTH, AND DEVELOPMENT IMPERATIVES "

University of South Africa

25-27 JUNE 2024

OVERVIEW

1. The 8th Annual Research Seminar was held from the 25th to the 27th of July 2024 at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa. This seminar was conducted under the theme: "***A focus on Africa's state fragility and resilience to exogenous shocks and disasters - sustainability, growth, and development imperatives.*** The event focused on enhancing the resilience of governance systems and public administration through the integration of social capital and community-driven human resource policies, particularly in crisis management contexts.
2. The seminar was co-hosted by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, University of South Africa (UNISA), School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University, and the Faculty of Economic and Management Services, University of Pretoria. The Seminar brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government officials, academics, and representatives from various organizations, to discuss and develop strategies for strengthening governance and public administration in Africa. The collaborative efforts of these organizations were instrumental in the success of the seminar, highlighting their commitment to fostering resilience and effective crisis management in the public sector. The Seminar was a pivotal event focusing on the intricacies of governance and public administration. This year's seminar aimed to unravel complexities and explore untapped opportunities within these domains, emphasizing the importance of good governance and societal resilience.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SEMINAR

3. The main objective of the 8th Edition Research Seminar was to build on the dialogue established in the previous seven seminars by bringing together African practitioners and academics to undertake research on topical, cross-cutting, interdisciplinary issues. The seminar aimed to inform policy propositions to enhance state capacity and capability for achieving the goals of Agendas 2030 and 2063. In line with Article 6 (1)(d) of the APRM Statute (2020), the seminar also served as a platform for sharing best practices at national, regional, and continental levels in accordance with the theme.
4. Other objectives included deepening governance insights to foster collective resilience within public institutions and communities, exchanging governance models and practices

to highlight effective public administration strategies, and cultivating collaborative networks among governance stakeholders. The seminar sought to unearth innovative governance and human resource management strategies that contribute to sustainability and robustness, enhance institutional and community resilience capacities, and foster ongoing governance research and inquiry. In the whole the 8th Seminar purposed to activate actionable governance-led resilience initiatives to strengthen resilience at various levels, ultimately mitigating state fragility and enhancing resilience.

MR. DAVID OMOZUAFOH: REGIONAL GOVERNANCE & RULE OF LAW ADVISOR, UNDP: KEYNOTE ADDRESS: “THE IMPERATIVE OF STATE LEGITIMACY IN MANAGING RISKS AND DISASTERS IN AFRICA”

5. In his address Mr. Omozuafoh delved into the critical issues of resource stress vulnerability and the looming challenges that Africa faces. He began by underscoring the vital importance of state legitimacy, which he argued is fundamentally derived from the provision of basic rights and services, the conduct of regular and high-quality elections, and the overall practice of good governance that meets the needs of the citizens.
6. Mr. Omozuafoh emphasized that without legitimacy, states struggle to manage risks and disasters effectively. He highlighted how established democracies, through their adherence to principles of good governance, have prospered and provided a model for nations to follow. He cited significant documents such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol and Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to reinforce his points on the importance of legitimate governance structures.
7. This input further laid out several key recommendations aimed at strengthening state capacity. Omozuafoh called for a concerted effort to translate government policies into tangible services that citizens can access and benefit from. He stressed the need to mitigate political and economic exclusion, suggesting that such undemocratic practices often lead to instability and hinders disaster management efforts.
8. Furthermore, he advocated for stronger collaboration between civil society and government, arguing that such partnerships can enhance the effectiveness of governance and service delivery. He also made a compelling case for replacing the rule of men with the rule of law, ensuring that governance is predictable, transparent, and just. In his comprehensive address, Mr. Omozuafoh presented a series of key recommendations aimed at bolstering the legitimacy and capacity of states in Africa to effectively manage risks and disasters.
 - a) First, he called for the strengthening of state capacity, emphasizing the need for states to enhance their ability to manage resources and deliver services efficiently. This, he argued, is fundamental to building trust and ensuring the stability of governance structures.

- b) Next, he stressed the importance of translating government policies into tangible services. It is not enough for governments to create policies; they must also ensure that these policies are implemented in a manner that directly benefits the citizens. This practical approach is essential for maintaining state legitimacy and meeting the needs of the populace.
 - c) Addressing political and economic exclusion was another key point. Mr Omozuafoh highlighted the dangers posed by the capture of African systems by elites, advocating for inclusive governance that combats this exclusion. Ensuring that all citizens have a stake in the political and economic systems is crucial for creating a fair and just society.
 - d) He also emphasized the necessity of creating space between civil society and government. In fostering a collaborative relationship, trust can be rebuilt, and governance can be more responsive to the needs of the people. This partnership is vital for the health of the state and for the effective management of crises.
 - e) Mr Omozuafoh did not overlook the demographic challenges facing Africa, particularly the security implications of a young population. He urged for recognition of the risks posed by this demographic and called for proactive measures to mitigate these risks. Addressing the needs and aspirations of the youth is essential for long-term stability and security.
 - f) The principle of the rule of law was another cornerstone of his recommendations. Mr Omozuafoh argued for the replacement of the rule of men with the rule of law to ensure fair and just governance. This shift is necessary to build a governance system that is predictable, transparent, and equitable.
 - g) Finally, he focused on state and national building, calling for efforts to build strong and resilient state and national institutions. These institutions are the backbone of a stable and capable state, able to withstand crises and deliver consistent services to its citizens.
9. In conclusion, Mr. Omozuafoh's address provided a roadmap for African states to enhance their legitimacy and capacity to manage risks and disasters. His recommendations are aimed at creating resilient states that can effectively respond to the challenges they face, ensuring stability, and fostering a better quality of life for their citizens. He reiterated the necessity for African states to build resilience to handle crises, citing the Ebola outbreak as a poignant example of where resilient governance could make a substantial difference. He left the audience with a clear message: the legitimacy of the state is not just a political ideal but a practical imperative for managing the risks and disasters that Africa faces now and in the future.

Prof. Sibusiso Moyo - DVC Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies Stellenbosch University

10. In a compelling presentation, Prof. Moyo emphasized the crucial importance of access to higher education and the necessity of student funding. This focus aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 1, which aims to support impoverished students and ensure that financial barriers do not

impede their educational pursuits. Prof. Moyo posed a thought-provoking query: "What is the University good for?" This introspection led to a reaffirmation of the commitment to not only educate but also to actively engage with and support the broader community. One of the ways the University of Stellenbosch aims to achieve this is by sharing university infrastructure with industry partners, facilitating knowledge transfers that can spur innovation and practical applications of academic research.

11. Looking forward, Prof. Moyo outlined several game-changing initiatives. Among these was the establishment of an interdisciplinary framework designed to foster collaboration across various fields of study. This approach aims to break down silos and encourage a holistic perspective in tackling complex challenges. Additionally, he highlighted efforts in epidemic response, showcasing a proactive stance in addressing public health crises. This initiative, he explained, underscores the role in not only educating future leaders but also in directly contributing to the well-being of society.
12. Support for postgraduate studies was another critical area of focus. Recognizing the importance of advanced research and the development of specialized skills, the University of Stellenbosch, is committed to providing robust support systems for postgraduate students, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to succeed. Prof. Moyo concluded that, the University of Stellenbosch approach, going forward, is one of inclusivity, community engagement, and forward-thinking. By prioritizing access to education, aligning with global development goals, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, the University aims to be a beacon of progress and innovation in higher education.

H.E Mr. Ilya Rogachev - Ambassador of Russia to South Africa

13. During his address, H.E. Mr. Ilya Rogachev, the Ambassador of Russia to South Africa, emphasized several critical points regarding state capabilities and security. He acknowledged that not every state can easily afford the necessary potential in various domains, such as advanced machinery, water, and food. These resources, while essential, do not immediately translate into improved living standards. Ambassador Rogachev stressed the importance of the state having the instruments to protect its own people, acknowledging that while such measures can be costly, they are indeed necessary. He highlighted Russia's role in presiding over BRICS, underscoring the nation's commitment to contributing to global security, with a specific focus on what he referred to as "hard security."
14. In addition to security, the ambassador explained Russia's efforts in the provision of the Covid-19 vaccine, showcasing the country's active involvement in addressing global health challenges. This initiative reflects Russia's broader strategy to support international stability and well-being through both security measures and humanitarian aid. In conclusion, Ambassador Rogachev's address underscored the necessity of robust state mechanisms for protection and the importance of international collaboration through platforms like BRICS to address both security and health crises.

REMARKS BY PARTNERS/ SELECTED DIGNITARIES:

15. Prof. Mogie Subban rendered an insightful presentation, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches and collaborative efforts in tackling complex issues. He argued that such strategies are crucial for addressing significant challenges like epidemic response and the advancement of postgraduate education. According to Prof. Subban, substantial progress in these critical areas can only be achieved through collective action and knowledge sharing. Dr Valery Yao Yao, representing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), shared valuable insights on pilot programs designed to enhance state resilience. He stressed the necessity of both mitigation and adaptation strategies to prevent disasters and reduce their impact. He highlighted the importance of proactive measures to strengthen state capacities, emphasizing that foresight and preparation are key to managing and overcoming potential crises.

16. Dr Botshabelo Maja, the Acting Principal of the National School of Government, identified three primary challenges related to resilience and fragility: state capacity, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impacts of floods and election aftermaths. He called for robust state mechanisms to navigate these challenges effectively. He advocated for a comprehensive approach that involves enhancing state capacities and implementing resilient strategies to withstand and recover from adversities. Prof. Van Dijk from the University of Pretoria provided an overview of the School of Public Management and Administration (SPMA). She detailed the institution's research focus areas, including policy and structures, innovation and behaviour, and public administration education. She underscored the importance of mutual learning and shared experiences in advancing public management practices. Her presentation highlighted the critical role of education and research in shaping effective public policies and administrative practices.

17. Dr Mmasetshaba, representing Prof. Vilnkomo Sibusiso, spoke about the mission to reshape state and private sector engagement. She stressed the need for collaboration in strengthening institutions, addressing critical issues such as grand corruption and inefficiencies in many states. She committed to partnering with like-minded entities to drive sustainable development through education and institutional reform. Her presentation underscored the importance of collective efforts and partnerships in achieving meaningful and lasting change.

DR GEORGE SCOT: AAPAM SECRETARY GENERAL

18. Dr George Scott, the Secretary General of AAPAM, welcomed attendees to the 8th Research Seminar, applauding the collaborative efforts between AAPAM, DPSA, and UNISA in organizing this annual event. He commended the seminar theme as timely and crucial, noting its relevance to the present times. Dr Scott expressed gratitude to the organizers and partners, particularly UNISA, for their significant contributions. He underscored the seminar's role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, emphasizing the importance of research in achieving these frameworks.

19. Dr Scott acknowledged the challenges Africa faces, including state fragility, economic instability, and vulnerability to disasters. He stressed the need for resilient systems to withstand such shocks, drawing attention to the COVID-19 pandemic as a recent example. AAPAM's commitment to strengthening Africa's resilience was highlighted through various initiatives, including training programs, seminars, the annual conference and partnerships with international organizations and academic institutions. Dr Scott encouraged participants to leverage the seminar for collaborative learning and knowledge exchange, aiming to develop strategies that drive sustainable development and enhance the continent's resilience.

SUB-THEME ONE: “POLICY, LEGISLATIVE, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR RESILIENT SOCIETIES”

20. Discussions on this sub-theme were triggered by the presentations rendered by Dr MaseTshaba, Dr Halima Khunoethe, Dr Norman Tafirenyika Nhede, Dr Mary Mangai, and Dr Mataywa Busieka. The contributors provided varied perspectives on the sub-theme and discussed the practical aspects of implementing resilient governance frameworks. Key discussion points included the importance of social capital in fostering community resilience, the role of digital technologies in enhancing governance and disaster response, and the challenges of building resilient infrastructure in fragile states. The inputs also highlighted case studies of successful resilience initiatives in various African countries, underscoring the need for collaborative approaches and policy innovation. This facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas, allowing participants to delve deeper into the topics and explore innovative solutions for building resilient societies.

21. This session emphasized the importance of a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a resilient society. Delegates highlighted the need for multifaceted approaches to foster resilience, recognizing that such societies are built on the foundation of strong policies, robust institutions, and the active engagement of diverse stakeholders. This holistic perspective is crucial in addressing the complex challenges faced by communities and ensuring sustainable development.

22. Additionally, the strategic integration of digital technologies in governance was stressed as a vital component of resilience. In incorporating advanced digital solutions, governance systems can become more efficient, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the populace. This integration not only enhances the capability of institutions to manage crises but also promotes inclusive participation and innovation in public administration. The discussions underscored that resilient societies are characterized by their adaptability, strong governance frameworks, and the proactive involvement of all sectors of society.

23. Discussions on this sub-theme provided a comprehensive exploration of how governance mechanisms, multi-stakeholder engagement, and robust institutional frameworks can contribute to societal resilience. Delegates emphasized the importance of implementing Agenda 2063, a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of Africa over the next 50 years. Governance mechanisms were highlighted as crucial for achieving the

goals outlined in this agenda, with a focus on the need for multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure inclusive and effective implementation.

24. One of the key topics addressed was the strengthening of public governance for sustainable development. The seminar identified several challenges and options for enhancing governance structures to support sustainable growth. Participants discussed the role of social capital in governance and crisis management, presenting a global perspective on how communities can be mobilized and engaged to build resilience. The integration of digital governance was also a significant point of discussion, with experts highlighting its potential to enhance resilience in public administration. In leveraging digital technologies, governments can improve their responsiveness and efficiency, thereby strengthening the capacity to manage crises and support sustainable development.
25. The seminar underscored the necessity of a holistic approach to governance, where policy, legislative, and institutional frameworks are aligned with the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. This alignment is essential for creating resilient societies that can withstand and recover from crises while fostering sustainable development. The insights and strategies discussed during the seminar provided a solid foundation for participants to enhance their governance practices and contribute to the overall resilience of their communities.

SUB-THEME TWO: MEASURES FOR INCREASING INVESTMENT FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

26. Discussions on this sub-theme began with an overview of the APRM, emphasizing its role in promoting good governance and sustainable development. Dr Sokela's presentation began with an overview of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), detailing its formation and purpose as a self-monitoring tool for promoting good governance and sustainable development across the continent. He elucidated that the APRM process, which includes self-assessment, peer review, and the development of a National Programme of Action, aims to identify and address governance challenges, ultimately fostering policies, standards, and practices designed to achieve political stability and economic growth. This comprehensive mechanism is essential for assessing government needs and enhancing governance frameworks in Africa.
27. The South African experience with APRM was presented as a case study, showcasing the benefits of active participation in governance reforms, strengthened democratic institutions, and the role of traditional leaders in disaster management. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was discussed, emphasizing the substantial costs and the importance of understanding financial impacts for future policy decisions. Documenting traditional practices for disaster mitigation and integrating them into formal policies were underscored as essential for enhancing community resilience. The session provided a comprehensive look at the necessary steps and considerations for building resilient societies, leveraging mechanisms like APRM, fostering partnerships, and incorporating traditional knowledge to better prepare for and mitigate the impacts of disasters.

28. Mr. Dazel Yagel reflected on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the timelines and impact of the crisis. He outlined the crucial stages of monitoring, starting from the first reported case, which gradually increased and necessitated extensive planning for quarantine and the declaration of a state of disaster. The risk adjustment approach, he explained, were tailored to the waves of the pandemic, which underscored the importance of governance in risk management, particularly in increasing access to early warnings and preparedness.
29. Prof. Chisasa focused on capital investment and disaster risk management for small-scale farmers in Africa, providing a background on the continent's agricultural challenges and the first 10-year plan of Agenda 2063. He elaborated on the pressing issues of hunger, lack of human settlement, and weak institutions, exacerbated by climate risks such as floods, droughts, and disease. His recommendations included infrastructure development, water storage facilities, irrigation systems, rural roads, and the implementation of insurance and risk transfer mechanisms like microinsurance, alongside robust policy support.
30. Ms. Kgothatso Semela discussed the global challenges faced and the role of open government approaches in responding to crises. She highlighted how these approaches can foster state resilience by building trust, accountability, and coordination. In leveraging open government, climate finance and energy transition reforms, nations can ensure transparency and efficiency. Open climate data reforms were particularly noted as crucial for informed decision-making and proactive crisis management.
31. Discussions on the sub-theme delved into the various steps that countries are taking to build and strengthen their infrastructure, critical economic sectors, governance, and social systems. A significant focus was on the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which promotes transparency, accountability, and inclusive governance. Representing a community of 2 billion people worldwide, the OGP aims to improve public services, enhance integrity, better manage resources, and increase corporate accountability. Countries participating in the OGP are encouraged to create action plans with specific, measurable reforms to achieve these goals.
32. It was reported that the current commitments under the OGP include resilience and climate finance reforms, emphasizing the transparent and effective management of climate action funds. This approach ensures resources are utilized efficiently to combat climate change, with active citizen engagement and participatory governance playing crucial roles. Communities are directly involved in climate action and resilience planning, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.
33. Participants discussed the importance of resilient state capacity, with open government practices promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement as key factors in building resilience. Integrating informal mining sectors into the formal economy was presented to enhance livelihoods and align mining policies with community needs and

sustainable development goals. A centralized portal for research to inform policy and decision-making was proposed as a strategic forum for fostering participatory governance and engaging communities. This includes robust mechanisms for local governance, precise data use, and community input in development planning. Participatory budgeting and informed planning were underscored as essential for effective governance and achieving positive development outcomes.

SUB-THEME THREE: STEPS THAT COUNTRIES ARE TAKING IN BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE, CRITICAL ECONOMIC SECTORS, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

34. Discussions in this session were led by Prof. Malefane Shepard, Prof. Michel Tshiyoyo, and Ms. Rutendo Nazare. They stressed the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing socio-economic challenges, emphasizing that no single entity can tackle these issues in isolation. The speakers highlighted the necessity of multi-stakeholder partnerships that include governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, and international bodies. Such collaborations can pool resources, expertise, and perspectives to create more comprehensive and effective solutions.
35. These contributors foregrounded innovative approaches to policymaking, suggesting that traditional methods may not be sufficient to address the complex and evolving challenges faced by African societies. They advocated for the adoption of adaptive policy frameworks that can respond to changing circumstances and emerging issues. This includes leveraging technology and data analytics to inform decision-making, enhancing policy coherence across different sectors, and fostering an inclusive policy development process that actively involves diverse community voices.
36. The speakers also emphasized the role of community engagement in driving sustainable development. They pointed out that policies and programs are more likely to succeed when they are rooted in the needs and aspirations of local communities. By involving community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, policymakers can ensure that interventions are culturally relevant, socially acceptable, and economically viable. This participatory approach not only enhances the effectiveness of policies but also empowers communities, builds social capital, and strengthens local governance structures.
37. Prof. Tshiyoyo introduced the concept of precision governance, emphasizing its potential to address intricate socio-economic and political challenges through data analytics. He highlighted the importance of government resilience in adapting to adversity, strategic planning for unforeseen events, and maintaining transparent communication. Precision governance, according to Prof. Tshiyoyo, drives resilience and enhances decision-making by incorporating risk management elements and fostering collaboration with various stakeholders. Proactive engagement and the role of entities like National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) were also cited as vital components of effective governance.

38. Prof. Tshiyoyo further explained that precision governance key to guiding disaster management and targeted interventions. This ensures that government actions are precise and effective, incorporating risk management elements like identifying vulnerabilities and implementing targeted measures. Precision governance enhances public service delivery and operational efficiency through inter-departmental collaboration, proactive stakeholder engagement, and efforts to bridge the digital divide.
39. Ms. Nazare elaborated on the core mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in assessing government needs and aligning policies with Agenda 2063. She emphasized that the APRM plays a critical role in evaluating the effectiveness of governance structures and ensuring that national policies are in sync with the long-term development goals outlined in Agenda 2063. This alignment is crucial for fostering sustainable development, economic growth, and social progress across the continent.
40. Additionally, she highlighted the necessity of publicizing information to improve governance and raise public awareness. Transparent communication about government activities, policy decisions, and development plans is essential for building trust between the government and its citizens. It also empowers the public to participate actively in governance processes, hold their leaders accountable, and contribute to the achievement of national and continental development objectives.
41. In summary, the session provided a comprehensive look at the innovative approaches and strategic steps countries are taking to build and strengthen their infrastructure, critical economic sectors, governance, and social systems. In embracing open government practices, leveraging data for precision governance, and ensuring active public participation, nations can enhance their resilience and promote sustainable development.

PHD COLLOQUIUM FEEDBACK: PHILOSOPHICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF RESEARCH

42. The session on the PhD colloquium provided an in-depth exploration of the philosophical and ethical dimensions integral to research. The discourse centred on the interplay between objectivity and subjectivity, the influence of societal norms, and the imperative for ethical consideration. A recurring theme in the colloquium was the challenge of separating researchers from their research. Participants engaged in a lively debate about whether true detachment is possible or even desirable. Many argued that acknowledging one's personal and societal context is crucial, as it allows researchers to better understand the potential biases and influences that may shape their work. This recognition, rather than diminishing the research's credibility, enhances it by providing a more nuanced and reflective approach. The discussion emphasized that such self-awareness does not undermine objectivity but enriches the research process by incorporating a broader perspective.
43. Balancing objectivity and subjectivity emerged as a critical aspect of research methodology. While objectivity is traditionally upheld as the gold standard for scientific inquiry, the colloquium highlighted the value of subjective insights. Participants noted that subjective

perspectives can offer depth and context that purely objective data might overlook. A balanced approach that integrates both objective and subjective elements can lead to more comprehensive and insightful findings. This balance is essential for a well-rounded understanding of research topics, allowing for a richer interpretation of data.

44. The need for researchers to be aware of the ethical frameworks influencing their work was underscored throughout the discussions. Ethical considerations were seen not merely as supplementary but as fundamental to scientifically rigorous research. Awareness of moral values and ethical standards ensures that research is conducted with integrity and respect for societal norms and values. This ethical vigilance is vital for maintaining public trust and the credibility of research findings.
45. Continuous examination of biases and assumptions was identified as a critical practice for enhancing the credibility and depth of research findings. Reflectivity ensures that researchers remain vigilant about their perspectives and the potential influences on their work. This practice fosters a more transparent and trustworthy research process, contributing to the overall robustness of scientific inquiry. Critically examining personal beliefs and societal norms was another focal point. Participants emphasized that researchers must be aware of how their belief systems can shape their understanding and interpretation of research topics. By scrutinizing these beliefs, researchers can achieve a more comprehensive and objective perspective, ensuring that their work is grounded in a broader and more inclusive context. This awareness helps mitigate the impact of societal influences, maintaining the research's integrity and objectivity.
46. The influence of power dynamics on knowledge production was a significant topic of discussion. Addressing power imbalances was deemed essential for ensuring fairness and inclusivity in research. In recognizing and addressing these dynamics, researchers can produce more equitable and socially just outcomes, contributing to a more democratic and ethical research environment. Methodological rigor, transparency, and critical peer review were identified as essential components for ensuring objectivity in research. These practices enhance the reliability and validity of findings, providing a solid foundation for scientific inquiry. Participants stressed that a commitment to these principles is vital for maintaining the integrity and credibility of research.
47. Finally, the broader social impact of research was a recurring theme. Researchers were encouraged to strive for outcomes that contribute to societal well-being and promote social justice and equity. In considering the social implications of their work, researchers can ensure that their contributions have a positive and meaningful impact on society, thereby enhancing the relevance and ethical grounding of their research endeavours.

SUB-THEME FOUR: STATE RESILIENCE, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY, AND PUBLIC SERVICE EFFICIENCY – TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

48. The Panel discussion session on this sub-theme facilitated delegates to engage in a deep dive into the concept of state resilience. Panellists Prof. Mello, Dr Sokhela, and Dr Yao Yao set off this discourse by emphasizing that a state's resilience is closely linked to the resilience of its people, highlighting that the strength and adaptability of a nation are fundamentally rooted in the capacity of its citizens to withstand and recover from socio-economic and environmental challenges. The panellists posed critical questions about whether South Africa has done enough to improve education standards and advocated for a pro-development education system that starts at an early age. This system should focus on reorienting children towards becoming innovators and entrepreneurs, as well as incorporating financial literacy into the curriculum.
49. Participants discussed the government's approach to addressing issues of sustainability, pointing out the paradox that although Africa is rich in resources, many of its people remain poor. The conversation highlighted that one cannot discuss sustainability and resilience without addressing social justice. Delegates explored how to create a learning generation that is equipped to tackle these challenges. It was revealed that voter education is one of the thematic areas under the APRM, and in South Africa, this mandate falls under the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Corruption was acknowledged as a significant contributor to disasters, with the APRM's Africa Governance Report highlighting key findings on corruption, especially within the mining industry. Participants stressed that corruption should be seen as a factor contributing to broader systemic disasters.
50. The discussion also touched on justice in the mining sector, particularly regarding the beneficiation of minerals, which has not been effectively implemented. Participants urged political leaders to seize the opportunity to enact progressive mining laws. They acknowledged that while we live in an era of information saturation, the challenge lies in sifting through this information to find what is truly beneficial. The state of South Africa's education system was a focal point, with participants recognizing its serious challenges. However, delegates debated whether these challenges constituted a disaster or simply areas needing urgent reform and improvement. The panel highlighted the importance of addressing these issues comprehensively to build a resilient and sustainable future for Africa.

EPILOGUE ANALYSIS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND WAY-FORWARD

51. The Eighth Annual Research Seminar provided a comprehensive platform for discussing and advancing the principles of good governance and effective public administration. Through its focus on unravelling complexities, enriching governance principles, and enhancing societal resilience, the seminar underscored the importance of continuous improvement and innovation in governance practices. The commitments and strategies discussed are vital steps towards building more effective, responsive, and resilient public administration systems.

52. A significant portion of the seminar was dedicated to a deep dive into the principles of good governance and effective public administration. This commitment was highlighted by:

- a) **In-depth Exploration:** The seminar facilitated thorough discussions and analyses of core principles that underpin good governance. Participants engaged in sessions designed to enhance their understanding of these principles and their practical applications.
- b) **Enrichment Through Social Capital and HR Policies:** Another key commitment was the enrichment of governance principles through the integration of social capital and innovative human resource policies. By leveraging social capital, the seminar aimed to foster stronger community ties and more effective public service delivery. Additionally, innovative HR policies were discussed as tools to attract, retain, and motivate talent within the public sector, ensuring a dynamic and capable workforce.

Enhancement of Societal Resilience

53. In the context of increasing global uncertainties, enhancing societal resilience emerged as a crucial theme. The seminar addressed this through two main strategies:

- a) **Addressing Global Uncertainties:** The sessions highlighted the need for governance structures to be adaptive and responsive to global challenges. In anticipating and preparing for uncertainties, public administration can better serve and protect communities.
- b) **Collaboration Across Sectors:** Emphasis was placed on the importance of collaboration between public sector entities, communities, and organizations. Through fostering partnerships and cooperative efforts, the seminar highlighted how collective action can significantly enhance societal resilience. These collaborations are essential to creating a more resilient and robust public administration framework capable of withstanding and responding to a multiplicity of challenges.

Pathways to Overcome Contemporary Crises

54. The seminar highlighted the critical need to develop strategies for overcoming contemporary crises, focusing on two main pathways:

- a) **Illuminating Strategies for Public Sector and Community Collaboration:** Emphasis was placed on the importance of collaborative efforts between the public sector and communities. In fostering strong partnerships, the seminar underscored how joint efforts can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions to contemporary challenges. This collaboration is seen as essential in leveraging diverse resources, knowledge, and expertise to address complex issues.
- b) **Navigating and Surmounting Multifaceted Challenges:** The discussions also centered on the need to navigate and overcome the multifaceted nature of modern crises. This involves understanding the interconnectedness of various challenges and developing comprehensive strategies that address these interdependencies. Participants explored methods to enhance resilience and adaptability, ensuring that

governance structures can effectively manage and mitigate the impacts of these challenges.

Vision for the Future

55. Looking ahead, the seminar outlined a clear vision for building a resilient and sustainable future through strong governance and community engagement. This vision is articulated through the following goals:

- a) **Forging a Resilient Future with Strong Governance Structures:** The seminar stressed the importance of establishing robust governance frameworks capable of withstanding and adapting to future challenges. The idea about reinforcing governance structures, the aim is to create a resilient society that can effectively respond to and recover from adversities.
- b) **Ensuring Preparedness to Adapt, Sustain, and Advance in Adversity:** Preparedness emerged as a key theme, with discussions focusing on strategies to enhance the ability of public administration and communities to adapt to changing circumstances. This includes developing flexible policies, investing in capacity building, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.
- c) **Promoting Societal Well-being and Stability in a Dynamic Global Context:** Finally, the vision for the future emphasizes the promotion of societal well-being and stability. In an increasingly dynamic and interconnected global environment, it is crucial to prioritize the health, safety, and prosperity of communities. This involves not only addressing immediate challenges but also proactively planning for long-term sustainability and growth.

56. The seminar provided a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing contemporary crises while laying out a visionary pathway for the future. With a focus on emphasizing collaboration, resilience, and adaptability, the seminar highlighted the importance of robust governance and proactive strategies in ensuring a stable and prosperous society. The pathways and vision discussed offer a roadmap for public sector entities, communities, and organizations to navigate the complexities of modern governance and build a resilient future together.

57. The PhD colloquium was a significant innovation that provided a comprehensive framework for conducting scientifically robust and ethically responsible research. The insights gained are invaluable for navigating the complexities of contemporary academic inquiry. PhD students drew great benefits in the realization that embracing these philosophical and ethical dimensions, researchers can enhance the quality and impact of their work, contributing to a more just and equitable society.

CLOSING CEREMONY

58. At the closing ceremony of the seminar, Prof. Vilnkomo Sibusiso chose to first render his gratitude to the people of South African for their resounding verdict during the recent elections, that were done in a peaceable environment. He acknowledged UNISA's long-standing history of over 150 years, having produced many eminent personalities. He highlighted the significance of the PhD colloquium, stating that postgraduate students are the intellectual force of both the present and the future, and should always be actively involved research conversations. Prof. Sibusiso extended his thanks to various stakeholders for their contributions, emphasizing that their input has opened opportunities for intellectuals, thinkers, and public servants to shape the future of the continent in a rapidly globalizing world.
59. Prof. Sibusiso stressed that Africa should not merely be a follower in global dialogues but a significant contributor. He called for increased research efforts towards Africa's sustainability and urged vigilance against the new scramble for Africa, asserting that the continent must not allow itself to be destroyed by external interests. He emphasized that the African Free Trade Agreement should be dictated by Africans and called for a critical examination of what has gone wrong with the Africa Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). He also underscored the importance of defending the rule of law, with public service being its custodian, and maintaining peace as a prerequisite for development. According to Prof. Sibusiso, education is critical as it is the ultimate liberator, contributing to science, innovation, and shaping the new world order.
60. Dr Sokhela echoed the sentiments expressed by Prof. Sibusiso, reinforcing the key points made during the address. On his part Dr Scott reiterated the message of gratitude, thanking UNISA for hosting the event, as well as other partners such as the University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University. He invited additional partners to join the initiative and requested the Thabo Mbeki Institute to ascend to this initiative. Dr Scott acknowledged that the Seminar was the most successful in the series, noting that the lessons learned would be crucial for future improvements.
61. Dr Scot announced that details on the 9th Seminar series would be communicated in due course and hinted at plans to continue and enhance the PhD colloquium as part of the seminar series. Additionally, Dr Scott proposed integrating a book launch into future events and emphasized the need to link the research series with the AAPAM Conference, ensuring that this report is presented at the Round Table Conference. At this point the 8th Research Seminar was declared officially closed.