

**9TH EDITION
RESEARCH
SEMINAR**

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**

**Agenda
2063**
The Africa we Want

**ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
(SDGS) 2030 AND AFRICAN UNION (AU)
AGENDA 2063**

THEME:

State resilience to shocks and disasters – The role of higher education and non-governmental organisations in strengthening state institutions

27 - 29 May 2025

Co-hosted by:
University of South Africa - The Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs
and Stellenbosch University.





Theme:

“State Resilience to Shocks and Disasters: The role of higher education and non-governmental organisations in strengthening state institutions”

**THABO MBEKI SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
27 – 29 May 2025
PRETORIA
South Africa**

INTRODUCTION

1. The 9th Edition of the AAPAM-DPSA Research Seminar (9th Seminar), convened from 27–29 May 2025 at the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs, University of South Africa (UNISA), expanded the trajectory established by the preceding 8th Seminar. The prior 8th Seminar, held under the theme “*Cultivating Collective Resilience: Integrating Governance and Public Administration in Crisis Management through Social Capital and Community-Engaged HR Policies*”, laid the groundwork for reimagining public administration through the lens of collaborative resilience. The 8th Seminar emphasized the value of community-driven governance, institutional agility, and responsive human resource systems in confronting crises.
2. Building on this foundation, the 9th Seminar deepened the discourse under the theme “*State Resilience to Shocks and Disasters: The Role of Higher Education and Non-Governmental Institutions in Strengthening State Institutions.*” The 9th Seminar shifted the focus toward actionable strategies and structural reforms that embed resilience in the design and function of public systems. The deliberations examined a range of strategic pillars, including adaptive institutional frameworks, rapid-response governance architecture, vulnerability assessments, infrastructure risk mapping, and recovery mechanisms.
3. With a strong emphasis on the enabling roles of academia and civil society, the 9th Seminar provided a platform to explore how higher education, and non-governmental actors can co-create knowledge, reinforce public policy, and support state-led responses to complex shocks, whether climate-induced, epidemiological, or socio-political. It highlighted the imperative of aligning resilience efforts with localized contexts, evidence-informed policymaking, and cross-sector collaboration, thereby contributing to a forward-looking governance model for a shock-prone world.
4. The 9th Seminar enjoyed high-level political endorsement, with visible support from the leadership of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). The Minister for the Public Service and Administration (Minister) officially opened the 9th Seminar, affirming the government’s commitment to fostering resilient state institutions in partnership with academia and civil society.
5. The Deputy Minister, Ms. Pinky Kekana, delivered an inspiring address, underscoring the need for homegrown solutions rooted in equity and public trust. Meanwhile, Mr. Willie Vukela, the Acting Director-General of the DPSA, emphasized the value of multisectoral partnerships in tackling Africa’s developmental challenges. Their collective presence not only reinforced the significance of the 9th Seminar’s objectives

but also elevated the discourse on public service reform and resilience to a strategic policy level.

DAY 1: 27TH MAY 2025:

OPENING AND WELCOME

PROFESSOR SOLOMON MAGANO, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

6. In his welcoming remarks, Professor Solomon Magano, Deputy Principal of the University of South Africa (UNISA), on behalf of the Principal, situated the 9th Seminar within the broader Continental momentum of Africa Day 2025, which was commemorated in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He posed a critical and forward-looking question - *“When will Africa be ready to deal with its challenges?”* - and offered an emphatic response: *“Africa must be ready now”*.
7. This imperative, he noted, underscores the importance of institutions like UNISA in shaping the Continent’s preparedness and resilience. He outlined the university’s investment in ten catalytic focus areas—including marine sciences, energy, digital transformation, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, student support, and co-curricular development - as key platforms for transforming public service and governance.
8. The Deputy Principal emphasized that resilience requires knowledge generation, innovation, and institutional partnership. He encouraged collaborations between universities, governments, and civil society, highlighting UNISA’s dual commitment to public administration both as a discipline and a transformative practice embedded in two of its academic faculties. Conferences such as this, he stressed, should not only reflect on past crises but also incubate fresh ideas to prevent future ones. *“The next disaster should find us ready,”* he concluded, reaffirming the role of academic institutions in preparing public servants and systems to respond with foresight, agility, and resolve.

HON. INKOSI MZAMO BUTHELEZI: MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

9. The 9th Seminar was officially opened by Honourable Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, Minister for the Public Service and Administration, on the 27th May 2025 at the University of South Africa (UNISA). In his opening address, the Minister warmly welcomed delegates from over 15 countries and two continents, acknowledging the collaborative efforts of AAPAM, UNISA, and DPSA in convening the 9th Seminar.
10. He underscored the 9th Seminar theme's relevance by highlighting its alignment with the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. The Minister emphasized the critical importance of capable,

ethical, and developmental institutions in responding to Africa's multifaceted challenges, including the aftermath of COVID-19, climate change, and socio-economic disparities.

11. The Minister advocated for the strategic role of higher education and NGOs in enhancing state resilience. He called for strengthened leadership capacities, inter-sectoral collaboration, and the adoption of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies to boost institutional efficiency and public service delivery. He emphasized the importance of robust digital infrastructure, regional cooperation, and prioritizing skilled human resource development.
12. Notably, he urged the 9th Seminar to serve as a platform for cultivating sustainable partnerships, promoting ethical governance, and generating policy-driven outcomes. Minister Buthelezi concluded by reaffirming the government's commitment to fostering a resilient public service capable of delivering inclusive development, while celebrating the 22nd anniversary of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as a symbol of Africa's progress in governance. He wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS – DR. IMTIAZ SOOLIMAN (FOUNDER, GIFT OF THE GIVERS)

13. In a powerful keynote address, Dr. Imtiaz Sooliman emphasized the critical importance of unity, collaboration, and citizen-driven leadership in disaster response. Drawing on the extensive work of Gift of the Givers across multiple crises, he highlighted how effective partnerships - with government, media, and ordinary citizens - enable a collective national response in times of disaster. Recalling interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the organisation's support to 210 hospitals, as well as operations in the Western Cape, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Turkey, Dr. Sooliman illustrated how a shared commitment transcends boundaries and delivers tangible relief.
14. He called for a mindset shift at all levels of the public service, stressing that disaster management must be proactive, decentralized, and inclusive. While senior management in South Africa often shows a willingness to collaborate, he noted that systemic obstacles persist in the lower ranks, particularly in health system management, infrastructure upkeep, and equipment readiness.
15. While acknowledging fiscal constraints, he urged government and civil society to optimise existing resources and address corruption decisively. "All hands-on deck" was his call to action, urging that resilience be anchored in accountability, infrastructure investment, and a renewed sense of national duty.

PROF. GEORGE SCOTT: SECRETARY GENERAL – AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)

16. Prof. Scott, representing AAPAM, delivered a reflective address tracing the evolution and significance of the AAPAM-DPSA Research Seminar series since its inception eight years ago. He reaffirmed AAPAM's core mission of strengthening public administration across Africa through research, stakeholder engagement, and capacity development. Highlighting the expanding scope of the Seminar series, Prof Scott noted that its value lies not only in advancing public administration but in influencing broader governance discourse tied to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063. He extended appreciation to the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), UNISA, Stellenbosch University, and all participating institutions for their commitment to the continuity and success of this initiative.
17. Prof. Scott welcomed South Africa's assumption of the G20 Presidency, viewing it as a vital opportunity to amplify the voice of the Global South and promotes inclusive governance. He called for the integration of this research forum into the G20 workstream, citing its thematic relevance in an era marked by climate crises, pandemics, and economic disruptions. Resilience, he stated, is no longer a luxury but an imperative, requiring multi-stakeholder collaboration, knowledge generation, and innovation to hold institutions accountable and drive meaningful change. In conclusion, he invited delegates to attend the 44th AAPAM Roundtable Conference, to be held at eSwatini, and engage further with AAPAM's capacity-building programs across the Continent.

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT:

AMB. BENNEDICTO FONSECA FILHO: THE AMBASSADOR OF BRAZIL TO SOUTH AFRICA

18. The Ambassador of Brazil to South Africa provided valuable insights into the shared governance challenges and opportunities between the two nations, particularly in the context of global platforms such as the G20. Reflecting on Brazil's own experience chairing the G20, the Ambassador highlighted initiatives focused on modernizing the state, including policy dialogues and side events scheduled to roll out later in the year. He emphasized the importance of anticipatory governance, citing reports and scenario-planning frameworks that examine how states can adapt to future crises and societal transformations.
19. A key theme in the Ambassador's address was the centrality of inclusive participation and accurate information in governance. He argued that credible government positions require input from diverse sectors, including scientists, civil society, and NGOs, particularly in complex domains like climate change. To combat

disinformation, Brazil has launched initiatives to ensure information integrity and institutionalized civil society participation in policymaking. Commending South Africa's leadership and inclusive governance dialogue, the Ambassador affirmed Brazil's commitment to building bridges with African nations, asserting that "African solutions to African challenges" resonates strongly with Brazil's development philosophy. He emphasized that while no state is perfect, collaborative learning and regional solidarity offer the strongest path forward.

MESSAGE OF SUPPORT FROM MS NONKULULEKO MASOEK: THE APRM CONTINENTAL SECRETARIAT

20. Ms Masoek made an input on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). She provided strategic reflections on the intersection of resilience and governance in the African context. The presentation highlighted the profound impact of disasters - both natural and man-made - on Africa's economic and social landscapes, particularly considering regional conflicts and systemic vulnerabilities. The APRM affirmed that the seminar's focus aligns closely with its expanded mandate, which prioritizes the strengthening of governance systems capable of withstanding and responding to crises. Resilience was framed not merely as a policy choice but as a developmental imperative anchored in social cohesion, institutional agility, and inclusive governance.
21. Ms Masoek called for greater investment in resilience frameworks, adaptive local government structures, and national preparedness strategies. She welcomed the seminar's forward-looking proposals, highlighting their potential to renew institutional models and policy design across member states. Delegates were encouraged to critically reflect on the actors and mechanisms that contribute to state resilience, and to utilize the seminar as a platform for reimagining governance systems that are responsive, community-centred, and future-ready. The APRM's input underscored the need for collaborative governance innovations that reinforce Africa's long-term stability and sustainable development trajectory.

REMARKS BY PROF. DERESH RAMJUGERNATH – VICE-CHANCELLOR: STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

22. Professor Deresh Ramjugernath reaffirmed Stellenbosch University's firm commitment to advancing the collaborative efforts underpinning the 9th Seminar. He emphasized that resilience readiness has never been more crucial, particularly as African institutions face compounded pressures from various directions. In this context, Prof Ramjugernath underscored that true resilience cannot be achieved in isolation but must be the product of collective collaboration, driven by shared values and a united vision.

23. He highlighted the role of inclusive, multi-stakeholder engagements in building institutions that are not only strong and agile but also rooted in integrity, ethics, and sound governance - key pillars for achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. Acknowledging the Thabo Mbeki School for hosting the 9th Seminar, Prof Ramjugernath concluded by reinforcing the importance of such forums in deepening partnerships, sharing knowledge, and collectively advancing Africa's governance and resilience agendas.

SUB-THEME 1: POLICY, LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR RESILIENT SOCIETIES

DR MATAYWA BUSIEKA: DIRECTOR: APRM: RESEARCH ANALYTICS: DPSA: "POLICY, LEGISLATIVE, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR RESILIENT SOCIETIES"

24. The presentation examined how effective governance structures, strategic policy formulation, legislative backing, and institutional coordination can build societal resilience in the face of increasing global shocks. The presentation provided a comprehensive overview of resilience frameworks, including social and economic protection policies, environmental and climate adaptation measures, and governance innovations. The input emphasized how national development strategies, such as South Africa's NDP 2030 and Rwanda's Vision 2050, alongside disaster risk reduction initiatives like Japan's Basic Act on Disaster Management, serve as building blocks for resilient societies.
25. Country case studies illustrated best practices in policy and institutional resilience, showing how integrated governance can enhance preparedness and recovery. Legislative frameworks such as social protection laws, environmental regulations, and anti-corruption measures support these efforts by ensuring rights-based, transparent, and inclusive development. The roles of civil society, the private sector, and regional and international bodies in implementing and sustaining resilience initiatives were also highlighted. The presentation concluded with a call for cross-sectoral collaboration and continuous improvement through monitoring and adaptation, underlining the necessity of locally grounded, globally informed resilience-building approaches.

PROF. TEBHOHO LEBAKENG, TM SCHOOL (UNISA): "LEVERAGING INTELLIGENCE IN AFRICAN STATECRAFT: TOWARDS PRUDENT PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS"

26. Prof. Lebakeng's presentation anchored a critical forward-looking discourse within the broader seminar theme of resilience and institutional reform. As Africa grapples with the compounded effects of climate change, pandemics, geopolitical instability, and digital vulnerabilities, Prof. Lebakeng emphasized that intelligence - understood as

timely, context-sensitive, and data-informed insight - is indispensable for sound governance. He argued that African states must shift from reactive policy postures to proactive, intelligence-led approaches that integrate foresight, strategic planning, and ethical governance. This form of statecraft, he noted, is foundational to navigating crises and asserting Africa's agency in global affairs. He called for embedding intelligence functions not only in traditional security spaces but also in public administration, service delivery, and diplomacy, ensuring that African states are prepared, agile, and visionary.

27. Furthermore, Prof. Lebakeng emphasized that leveraging intelligence must be grounded in African epistemologies and governance values to be both relevant and transformative. He highlighted the need for stronger knowledge systems within public institutions, enhanced collaboration with academia, and the ethical management of digital tools to combat misinformation and foster policy coherence. Drawing from the 9th Seminar's broader agenda, he proposed that higher education institutions serve as incubators for intelligence-driven policy development through interdisciplinary research and leadership development. Ultimately, the presentation reaffirmed that Africa's resilience and influence will depend on its capacity to institutionalize foresight and intelligence in both domestic governance and international engagements, ensuring that policy choices are responsive, anticipatory, and grounded in the lived realities of African societies.

DR. K. MATEBESE-NOTSHULWANA, TM SCHOOL (UNISA): A CRITICAL ROLE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT IN STRENGTHENING STATE CAPACITY

28. Dr. Notshulwana's presentation explored the indispensable role of legislative oversight in enhancing the capacity and integrity of state institutions. Emphasizing that effective governance is underpinned by accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, she argued that legislatures are not merely law-making bodies but strategic levers for monitoring executive action and ensuring that policy implementation aligns with national development objectives. In the context of shocks and disasters, legislative oversight becomes even more critical, serving as a bulwark against maladministration, inefficiency, and elite capture during times of crisis. She highlighted that well-functioning oversight mechanisms can help identify systemic risks early, enforce remedial actions, and ensure that state responses are citizen-centred and constitutionally compliant.
29. Drawing from the South African experience and broader continental lessons, Dr. Matebese-Notshulwana demonstrated how parliamentary committees, audit institutions, and civic oversight bodies must collaborate to build a resilient state apparatus. She emphasized the importance of capacity-building for legislators, improved access to data, and robust engagement with civil society and academia to inform oversight practices. Furthermore, she called for a revitalization of the social

contract through participatory governance models where citizens see parliaments not as distant entities, but as active defenders of their rights and needs. Ultimately, her presentation positioned legislative oversight as a cornerstone of state resilience - one that transforms policy intent into public value through vigilant scrutiny, strategic foresight, and democratic accountability.

DISCUSSIONS, RESPONSES, AND OBSERVATIONS

30. Participants expressed appreciation for the contextual framing of resilience as a function of policy coherence and institutional synergy, particularly highlighting the relevance of comparative case studies, such as Rwanda and Japan, in inspiring African solutions. Prof. Lebakeng's call for embedding intelligence within public administration struck a chord with several attendees, who emphasized the need for foresight capabilities and data-driven planning in navigating complex crises. His proposal to localize intelligence within African epistemologies was seen as both empowering and timely.
31. Dr. Matebese-Notshulwana's exploration of legislative oversight resonated deeply, prompting reflections on how parliaments can shift from reactive scrutiny to proactive resilience enablers. Participants called for stronger linkages between oversight bodies, civil society, and academia to ensure that monitoring translates into tangible public value. Collectively, the presentations sparked a rich exchange on the interdependence of policy design, anticipatory governance, and democratic accountability in building adaptive and inclusive states.

SUB-THEME 2: MECHANISMS ADOPTED BY COUNTRIES TO ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND A SYSTEM FOR EARLY DETECTION AND WARNING DURING SHOCKS, INFECTIOUS DISEASES, AND DISASTERS

DR. MARY MANGAI – UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: BARRIERS AND PROSPECTS TO IMPLEMENTING RESILIENCE STRATEGIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

32. Dr. Mangai delivered an insightful presentation on the barriers and opportunities surrounding the implementation of resilience strategies in sub-Saharan Africa. She focused on the critical need for such strategies to be aligned with local realities, community needs, and indigenous knowledge systems. Emphasizing the importance of contextual adaptation, she argued that inclusive, bottom-up approaches are essential to ensure ownership and effectiveness.
33. Dr. Mangai posed a key question on how to scale up innovative, cross-sectoral, and regional approaches to resilience, particularly in the face of climate change, pandemics, and conflict. She pointed to the potential of technology, public-private

partnerships, and the collaborative frameworks of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union as vital enablers in this regard.

DISCUSSIONS, RESPONSES, AND OBSERVATIONS

34. During the discussions, participants reflected on both structural and practical challenges. While public-private partnerships were seen as a potential financing solution, concerns were raised about their complexity and the difficulties local actors face in accessing these funds. The limitations of green climate funding, often geared toward short-term solutions, were highlighted as inadequate for building long-term resilience. Many noted that domestic financing mechanisms remain weak and that local organizations are frequently excluded from adaptation financing.
35. There was a call for the establishment of regional disaster funds and greater inclusion of local institutions. Participants proposed the use of digital platforms for crowdfunding and the sharing of community narratives, emphasizing the importance of leveraging technology in areas such as intercropping and sustainable agriculture. The session highlighted the importance of attracting philanthropic investment during stable periods and stressed the value of incorporating indigenous knowledge into formal resilience frameworks.

PROF. DAVID MELLO – ACTING DIRECTOR: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: THABO MBEKI AFRICAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

36. Prof. Mello's presentation focused on the institutional philosophy and strategic orientation of the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs. He elaborated on the school's founding philosophy, which is rooted in Pan-Africanism, ethical leadership, and a commitment to transformative governance. The school envisions a future where Africa is led by a cadre of competent, moral, and visionary leaders who can effectively respond to the continent's complex developmental challenges.
37. Prof. Mello also outlined the school's mission to provide advanced training, research, and thought leadership that integrates academic rigor with practical governance solutions. The presentation detailed the school's internal structure, its key departments, and focus areas, including leadership development, policy research, governance innovation, and continental diplomacy. He concluded that the Thabo Mbeki School positions itself as a hub for knowledge exchange and institutional collaboration aimed at reshaping Africa's public sector for resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability.

DAY TWO 28 MAY 2025

SUB-THEME 3: MEASURES IN PLACE FOR INCREASING INVESTMENT (FINANCIAL, CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND HUMAN) FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

MR JURGENS DYSEL: CHIEF DIRECTOR: POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT: THE NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE

38. This comprehensive case study was on disaster risk reduction interventions in South Africa. Mr. Dyssel outlined the disaster management system as one that spans across prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery phases, emphasizing a strategic focus on enhancing national disaster preparedness.
39. He elucidated that the South African model operates on four peer-reviewed objectives: governing risk knowledge, enhancing that knowledge base, investing in resilience (notably identified as an under-resourced area), and ensuring robust preparedness and recovery systems. Lessons drawn from major crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic during which the government committed R550 billion, highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of disaster management in the country.
40. Mr. Dyssel further identified gaps within the current disaster management framework, citing environmental, institutional, and legislative deficiencies. While progress has been made, the legal architecture supporting disaster risk reduction still presents notable weaknesses, impeding effective implementation. He proposed a reformed delivery model and operational framework designed to improve risk governance, streamline institutional structures, and enhance intersectoral coordination.
41. Recommendations included the establishment of sector-specific focal points, increased investment in disaster risk reduction capacity, and the creation of an expert network to drive innovation and response efficacy. The presentation reinforced that resilience must be systematically built into governance systems to withstand both predictable and unforeseen shocks.

SUB-THEME 4: STEPS THAT COUNTRIES ARE TAKING IN BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING INFRASTRUCTURE, CRITICAL ECONOMIC SECTORS, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS

MANASEH TSHIGUVHO: DPSA – ‘RESILIENT STATE AND SERVICE DELIVERY ENVIRONMENT’

42. Mr Tshiguvho’s presentation focused on defining and analysing the broader macro-level service delivery environment to assess how it contributes to building a resilient state. Central to the study was the concept of citizen-centredness, with the argument

that public service strategies must not only respond to crises but also anticipate them in a way that aligns with citizens' needs and realities. He explored the efficacy of resilience-oriented approaches that place citizens at the heart of public service delivery, especially within the health sector.

43. Mr Tshiguvho emphasized the importance of integrating public health services across all three spheres of government—national, provincial, and local—to ensure coherence and continuity during and after crises. Regular assessments of citizen-centred health services were recommended as essential for monitoring performance and improving outcomes. He concluded by calling for strengthened partnerships between government institutions and academia to enhance evidence-based service design and delivery. He also highlighted the need for further research to deepen understanding and inform future resilience-building efforts.

DISCUSSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND RESPONSES

44. The ensuing discussions addressed South Africa's disaster early warning systems, fire risk in informal settlements, and the broader challenge of building resilience, particularly in rural areas. Participants acknowledged the strength of South Africa's early warning system, which is collaborative and benefits from regular engagements with weather services. However, delegates also noted the need for continuous improvement, particularly in data management and dissemination, such as using digital messaging for alerts. The conversation highlighted the potential role of the G20 in enhancing the global dissemination of early warning systems and advancing science-led approaches for future resilience.
45. Regarding fires in informal settlements, speakers emphasized that while technical solutions exist, implementation remains a challenge due to structural vulnerabilities. Suggestions included establishing local fire brigades, improving building practices, and using different risk models to inform planning. Accountability was flagged as critical for effective risk mitigation. COVID-19 was referenced as a formative experience that enhanced disaster readiness. Additional questions focused on improving disaster literacy in rural communities and the relevance of technology, especially in the healthcare sector, to advance both preparedness and service delivery. The overarching theme was the importance of inclusive, data-driven, and locally grounded disaster management strategies.

THEME 5: STEPS THAT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS ARE TAKING TO COMPLEMENT THE CAPACITY OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

PROF MICHEL TSHIYOYO – NGO CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD SDG 16 IN SOUTH AFRICA

46. Prof. Tshiyoyo's presentation highlighted the significant role that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) play in complementing the state's capacity to advance Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) in South Africa, which emphasises peace, justice, and strong institutions. He underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, noting that achieving SDG 16 is not the sole responsibility of the government but requires active collaboration with civil society. Drawing on South Africa's experience, Prof. Tshiyoyo illustrated how NGOs contribute to justice delivery, social accountability, and governance reform, while also unpacking the sector's strengths and limitations.
47. Prof Tshiyoyo discussed various challenges facing NGOs, including internal organisational weaknesses, bureaucratic hurdles in government collaboration, and gaps in accountability and capacity. He, however, identified promising opportunities, such as enhanced community engagement, capacity building through partnerships, and the use of evidence-based impact assessments to demonstrate value. Case studies, including those involving faith-based organisations such as churches, showcased how local actors have positively influenced social cohesion and governance outcomes. He concluded by affirming that NGOs remain crucial partners in building resilient, just, and inclusive governance systems in South Africa.

PROF. TYANAI MASIYA & DR. STELLAH LUBINGA: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA – STRENGTHENING HIV/AIDS RESPONSE THROUGH NGO STRATEGIES

48. Prof. Masiya and Dr. Lubinga presented research on how NGOs are adapting their strategies to sustain and strengthen state capacity in responding to HIV/AIDS in low-income South African communities, particularly in the face of declining international donor funding. Their study employed a structured research methodology to assess institutional frameworks and strategic innovations that enable NGOs to remain effective despite fiscal constraints. Key strategies identified include financial adaptation, such as transitioning to local funding models, diversifying funding sources, and employing labour-intensive interventions, as well as modifying service delivery approaches. These include focusing on core health services, integrating services across platforms, adapting delivery models to context-specific needs, and improving monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems.

49. The researchers emphasized the critical role of strategic partnerships, including collaborations with public sector institutions, the formation of NGO consortia, and the establishment of formal agreements to enhance capacity. Community engagement emerged as a cornerstone of resilience-building, with approaches such as empowering community care workers, promoting community ownership of health initiatives, and leveraging local resources.
50. The presenter's recommendations included increased local investment in NGOs, stronger monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, targeted investment in NGO workforce development, and the institutionalization of NGO-public sector collaboration as a long-term sustainability measure. The presentation reinforced that localized, strategic, and community-rooted NGO actions are essential for ensuring continuity and impact in health service delivery.

DISCUSSION, RESPONSES, AND OBSERVATIONS

51. During the plenary feedback session, participants raised probing questions regarding the localization of NGOs, the availability of legislative frameworks for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and the apparent lack of robust advocacy efforts against the rampant crime. A central concern was how NGOs can effectively transition their capacity to the communities they serve, ensuring long-term sustainability and ownership.
52. In response, it was acknowledged that while NGOs have made significant contributions, the persistence of a "dependency syndrome" can undermine their impact. The presenters highlighted that numerous best practices exist; yet, some organizations remain overly focused on funding, which practice occasionally compromises their integrity.
53. South Africa was cited as a positive example of advocacy-driven NGO work, particularly where partnerships with universities have bolstered research and evidence-based interventions. The conversation underscored the value of volunteerism and called for more precise definitions of responsibility regarding who should conduct monitoring and evaluation (M&E) within the NGO sector to ensure accountability and effectiveness.

SESSION ON THE G20

PROF ZWELI NDEVU, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

54. Prof. Zweli Ndevu, opened the G20 session with a comprehensive overview of the forum's structure and strategic focus. He explained that the G20 is a premier global

platform composed of 19 individual countries and the European Union, collectively representing approximately 85% of global GDP and 75% of international trade. Its mandate is to coordinate international economic policy and respond to global developmental challenges.

55. Prof. Ndevu highlighted that the G20 operates through two principal tracks: the Finance Track, which addresses issues such as macroeconomic stability, financial regulation, and debt sustainability; and the Sherpa Track, which focuses on broader social and developmental priorities, including health, education, employment, climate change, and digitalization.

DR. B. MPHAHLELE, THABO MBEKI AFRICAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (UNISA)

56. Dr Mphahlele noted that as South Africa assumes the G20 Presidency, the discussion highlighted the unique opportunity and significant responsibility this presents, especially in a period marked by global and regional instability. The Presidency must demonstrate strategic agility and diplomatic clarity to navigate complex geopolitical tensions, both within Africa and internationally.
57. Dr Mphahlele emphasized that the G20's current strategic agenda is shaped by the urgent need to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economies amid growing global volatility. South Africa's Presidency of the G20 in 2025, she noted, offers a unique opportunity to elevate African interests on the world stage. Dr. Mphahlele drew attention to the critical importance of SDG 16—promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions—as a guiding theme and emphasized the necessity of integrating peacebuilding and gender equity into the G20's economic and climate-related efforts.
58. Dr. Mphahlele warned that a fragmented African approach to the G20 process would weaken the continent's negotiating power, hinder African Union integration, and challenge South Africa's leadership role. She concluded by urging African governments, civil society, and research institutions to engage proactively, strategically, and in a coordinated manner to ensure that Africa's voice is both unified and impactful within the G20 process.

DISCUSSION, RESPONSES, AND OBSERVATIONS

59. Key issues raised included whether Africa can and should present a unified voice, with disunity potentially undermining collective advocacy, weakening negotiating leverage, and hindering the African Union's integration into the G20. South Africa's leadership was viewed as being under the spotlight, prompting reflections on its capacity to lead effectively. It was suggested that South Africa should leverage this platform to advance priorities such as SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions),

embed peacebuilding within broader economic and climate strategies, and champion a gender-inclusive G20 agenda. The session concluded by urging South Africa to anticipate risks through proactive scenario planning and to use this leadership moment to promote inclusive, global governance reforms.

SUB-THEME 6: HIGHER EDUCATION INNOVATIONS IN ADDRESSING CONTINENTAL CHALLENGES

DR. TD TUMBA, TM SCHOOL (UNISA): DETERMINANTS OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT LITERACY AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

60. Dr. Tumba's research explored how institutional factors, leadership, and inter-agency dynamics shape literacy levels. The study acknowledged that South Africa, like many African nations, is vulnerable to a variety of disasters, both natural and human-induced. Disaster management literacy was underscored as a crucial competence, especially for public servants, who bear both a technical and civic responsibility in times of crisis. The presentation examined how education, professional development, and leadership culture impact the readiness of public servants, as well as how demographic patterns and inter-agency coordination influence knowledge acquisition and response effectiveness.
61. The findings revealed that inter-agency collaboration plays a vital role in enhancing disaster literacy and that disaster management knowledge is inherently multifaceted. Educated and well-trained public servants exhibited stronger mitigation capabilities and greater responsiveness to emergencies. Dr. Tumba emphasized the need to deepen professional education in disaster management, integrate post-recovery planning into curricula, and improve systemic coordination across departments. The research ultimately reinforces the argument that higher education institutions play a central role in cultivating resilient, well-prepared governance systems capable of managing disasters effectively.

DR. BONGIWE. MPHAHLELE: THABO MBEKI SCHOOL: ASSESSING THE DATA GAPS AND NEEDS FOR CLIMATE RESILIENT AND WATER INVESTMENT IN CLIMATE-RESILIENT WATER INVESTMENT IN SADC

62. Dr. Mphahlele's contribution focused on the SADC Regional Climate Resilient Water Investment Programme. This initiative, launched by the SADC Secretariat in partnership with the Global Water Partnership Southern Africa (GWP-SA), aims to mobilize \$30 billion by 2030 to strengthen climate-resilient water infrastructure across the region. The programme's core priorities include enhancing transboundary water governance, developing sustainable infrastructure, establishing financing partnerships, and promoting regional capacity building and cooperation. A key feature

of the initiative is the SADC Water Resilience Tool, introduced in 2024, which seeks to assess vulnerabilities, prioritize investments, and coordinate regional efforts.

63. Dr. Mphahlele outlined pressing challenges, particularly the region's underdeveloped climate information systems and fragmented early warning systems (EWS), which severely hinder effective climate-resilient investment. These gaps, she said, reduce preparedness, impair response strategies, and result in inefficient resource allocation. She emphasized the urgent need to improve data quality, harmonize EWS across the region, and ensure the resilience tool is aligned with local realities and implementation capacities. Her recommendations included bolstering regional cooperation, increasing investment in data systems, and ensuring that national priorities are fully integrated into the SADC framework for maximum impact and sustainability.

DISCUSSIONS, RESPONSES, AND OBSERVATIONS

64. The discussions following Dr. Mphahlele's presentation raised pertinent questions on the feasibility of mobilizing the ambitious \$30 billion target for climate-resilient water infrastructure in the SADC region. Participants explored whether such financing is realistic given prevailing economic constraints and called for a review of global best practices to inform the implementation of the Africa Investment Programme (AIP). There was consensus that planning documents must integrate climate dynamics more robustly, ensuring that infrastructure and water planning strategies remain climate resilient.
65. Further responses highlighted the need to balance industrial development with sustainable water use and resilience-building. Participants emphasized the importance of public servants having access to accurate and timely information for effective disaster management. Lastly, a strong call was made to leverage uniquely African innovations and indigenous knowledge systems, which can offer context-specific solutions to climate challenges while enhancing ownership and sustainability across the continent.

MS. ASANDA DYARVANE: INTERN: UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA: BUILDING CYBER RESILIENCE IN AFRICA

66. In a focused presentation on cyber resilience, Ms. Dyarvane addressed the urgent need to strengthen Africa's digital infrastructure in the face of rising cyber threats. Her input commenced with a definition of cybersecurity and outlined its significance amid a wave of major cyberattacks across the continent from late 2024 to early 2025. Ms. Dyarvane highlighted the vulnerabilities within current systems and emphasized the importance of conducting cyber research, developing a skilled workforce, and establishing a secure digital ecosystem. Initiatives at leading institutions such as the University of Cape Town, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of Ghana were cited as positive steps toward enhancing cybersecurity capacity.

67. Key recommendations emphasized the necessity of national and regional collaboration to build resilient digital systems. Ms. Dyarvane advocated for partnerships between higher education institutions, such as the University of Cape Town and the University of Pretoria, and government departments to drive innovation and policy development. She further argued that cybersecurity should be embedded within broader resilience frameworks, leveraging academic expertise to craft locally relevant and globally competitive responses to digital threats.

DAY 3: 29 May 2025 CLOSING CEREMONY

PROF. GEORGE SCOTT AND DR. BOTSHABELO MAJA

68. Prof. Scott expressed deep appreciation for the insightful remarks made by the Deputy Minister, stating that the key issues were interconnected and that this was both humbling and inspiring. He committed to taking up the Deputy Minister's call to view public service not merely as employment, but as a noble calling dedicated to transformation and collective resilience.

69. Dr. Botshabelo Maja from the South African National School of Government (NSG) delivered a provocative reflection on Africa's place in a transactional global order. He highlighted that Africa continues to lag due to internal complacencies and the failure to reimagine governance boldly. Emphasizing that governance must be people-centred and forward-looking, Dr. Maja advocated for a fundamental shift in mindset, especially among public servants. He pointed to the NSG's online African Charter initiative as a step toward embedding integrity, professionalism, and transformational values in public service. He concluded that progress is impossible without fixing governance and that a professional public service is central to enabling economic growth and restoring Africa's dignity.

CLOSING REMARKS: PROF. ZWELI NDEVU AND MR. WILLIE VUKELA

70. Prof. Ndevu confirmed Stellenbosch's acceptance to host the 10th edition of the research seminar. He provided an overview of the School of Public Leadership, highlighting its continental roots and its commitment to advancing world-class research in Africa. He emphasized the need to shift global academic focus toward the southern hemisphere and reaffirmed the school's dedication to knowledge production and capacity-building that responds to Africa's developmental context.

71. Mr. Willie Vukela, Acting Director-General of the DPSA, underscored the value of partnerships in addressing Africa's complex governance and development challenges. He commended the seminar for successfully bridging the gap between theory and

practice, noting that while Africa is resource-rich, the continent's real challenge lies in translating theoretical knowledge into practical implementation. Mr. Vukela highlighted that the seminar serves as a critical platform in the lead-up to South Africa's G20 Presidency handover in November and called for all stakeholders to act collectively and decisively to drive transformative change across the continent.

PROF. GEORGE SCOTT (AAPAM SECRETARY-GENERAL)

72. Prof. George Scott expressed deep appreciation to all participating institutions, including the Thabo Mbeki African School of Public and International Affairs (TM School), the University of South Africa (UNISA), Stellenbosch University (SU), and the University of Pretoria (UP), for their pivotal roles in organizing and supporting the 9th Research Seminar. He extended special thanks to all participants for their active engagement and meaningful contributions throughout the sessions, which helped enrich the discourse on resilience, governance, and sustainable development.
73. Prof Scott further challenged the conveners to heed the Deputy Minister's proposal and consider hosting the next seminar in South Sudan. He proposed a tripartite initiative involving the DPSA, AAPAM, and the South Sudanese government. Prof. Scott also highlighted ongoing AAPAM programmes being undertaken in collaboration with academic and public institutions, aimed at strengthening capacity across the continent. In closing, he extended a general invitation to all present to attend the upcoming 44th AAPAM Roundtable Conference, where the insights and outcomes from this seminar and others will be consolidated and integrated into policy and practice.

Ms. PINKY KEKANA: DEPUTY MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

74. In her closing remarks, Ms. Kekana commended AAPAM, UNISA, and the DPSA for facilitating a transformative seminar that reinvigorated the shared vision of strengthening resilience across the continent. She emphasized that the core focus on Agenda 2063 and the SDGs underscored the urgency of building systems and institutions that can respond effectively to Africa's complex landscape of recurring disasters. The Deputy Minister emphasized that resilience is not merely institutional, but human-centred—rooted in trust, equity, and community. She described the task of building institutions not as bureaucratic formality but as a revolutionary imperative that should reflect ethical grounding, inclusion, and diversity.
75. Ms Kekana noted that the seminar affirmed the importance of home-grown solutions shaped by Africa's unique realities and the power of cross-border solidarity. She warned that aspirations alone will not deliver the Africa we want; rather, intentional,

equity-focused resilience is the actual driver of transformation. Public servants, she urged, must see their roles as a higher calling, leveraging their positions to effect meaningful change. The Deputy Minister challenged the organisers to consider hosting one of the sessions in South Sudan as an expression of solidarity and capacity-building for the ongoing post-conflict reconstruction efforts here. Drawing on the discussions, she called for these engagements to be translated into policy actions, training programs, and implementation strategies, including opportunities to transfer best practices to fragile contexts such as South Sudan. The 9th Edition Seminar was declared officially closed.