UNDESA

**REGIONAL FORUM ON REINVENTING GOVERNMENT IN AFRICA:
REPOSITIONING THE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR THE CHALLENGES OF
NEPAD
17 – 19 JANUARY 2005
SANDTON CONVENTION CENTRE, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA**

**GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS AND
INNOVATIONS IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES: A FOCUS ON ACHIEVEMENTS,
SETBACKS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

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Governance and Public Administration Reforms and Innovations in African Countries: A Focus on Achievements, Setbacks and Future Directions (by Dr. John-Mary Kauzya and Prof. Jide Balogun[1])

Introduction

In recent years, several African countries have implemented far-reaching governance and public service reform measures. These measures have touched almost every aspect of the continent's political life – from the way governments are elected and changed, through the workings of the three (i.e., the executive, the legislative and the judicial) branches of government, to the role that civil society plays in holding state functionaries to account. The reforms have not stopped with the expansion of the political space, but have moved further to promote and/or accelerate the revitalization of the public service.

While a lot has been accomplished, much more remains to be done to reposition governance and public administration institutions for the emerging challenges, including those related to the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Success in re-inventing Africa's governance and public administration systems for the challenges of NEPAD hinges on a number of things including leadership, especially, the capacity of the leadership class to build broad-based national and regional coalitions and channel energies towards the realization of the NEPAD vision. The challenges ahead are certainly daunting, but, with the right caliber of leaders, are not insurmountable.

In this paper we begin by presenting, with examples, an overview of the reform measures undertaken in recent years in a number of African countries. We then proceed to assess the impact of the reforms on the capacity, integrity and "NEPAD-readiness" of governance and public administration institutions. The concluding section focuses on leadership, and the issues that civic, political, government, and public service leaders have to face as well as some of the bold measures they have to adopt to re-invent the government for the NEPAD challenge and the human security of Africans. The underlying question is: To what extent can these reforms be equated to innovations?

I. Governance and Public Service Reform: Challenges, responses, and milestones

The challenges facing public administration worldwide have multiplied since the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/136 in 1995 and 50/225 in 1996 (Bertucci and Dugget). In the specific case of Africa, and as Table 1 graphically shows, poverty and inequality are among the challenges that government must seriously and diligently tackle.

Table 1: Share of population living on less than USD 1 a day world-wide (%), 1987 - 1998

	Share of population living on less than USD 1 a day (%)				
	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998
Western Asia/Middle East & N. Africa	4.3	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	46.6	47.7	49.7	48.5	46.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	15.3	16.8	15.3	15.6	15.6
East Asia and the Pacific	26.6	27.6	25.2	14.9	15.3
Europe & Central Asia	0.2	1.6	4	5.1	5.1
South Asia	44.9	44	42.4	42.3	40

Source: IFAD, OECD, and UNDESA.

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Indeed, the dominant concern in this region of approximately 650 million people is how to sustain on-going governance reform and economic restructuring programmes, while at the same time recording breakthroughs in poverty alleviation efforts, and maintaining peace and stability. The continent has certainly made progress in the area of governance, with a growing number of countries, more than two thirds, opting out of one-party rule and military dictatorships and introducing multiparty democracies. This is in contrast to the 1980s when elections were permitted in only a few (probably less than seven) countries. While corruption is still an issue, a number of countries have instituted measures to combat the menace.

Among the measures specifically adopted to revitalize governance institutions are the abolition of one-party rule and the legalization of multi-party competition, the organization and conduct of presidential and legislative elections, the enhancement of the policy analytic, budget review, and general oversight capacities of legislatures, the consolidation of the independence of the judiciary, and the empowerment of civic bodies to participate in the political process and to perform sundry policy advocacy and watch-dog roles. To contain grand and petty corruption, African Governments have established high-powered anti-corruption bodies, and have strengthened the enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. While it is too early to say that the era of impunity is past, accountability is increasingly becoming a fact of public life. An environment conducive to entrepreneurship and private sector development is emerging, thanks to the efforts made to strengthen the capacity of the police and the judiciary, and ensure that legally valid contracts are enforced.

Public service reform

As part of the efforts at satisfying the growing demand for "democracy dividends", African Governments have in recent years shifted attention to the reform of the public service. In fact, the signs are visible, and the evidence is overwhelming, that issues that had once been evaded in political circles (e.g., issues of competence, performance, and integrity of the public service) are now being debated within and across political parties. In consonance with the momentous changes taking place in the broad governance sphere (particularly, the replacement of one-party and/or military rule with multi-party competition) the career service is gradually being reconfigured into a de-politicized and professional institution.

The public service reform programmes implemented in the last ten years underscore the importance that the African leaders now attach to the professionalism as well as the performance and productivity of the service. Taking their cues from the experience with the administrative reform initiatives of the early post independence period (1960s and 1970s), and the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on the public service, a growing number of countries embarked on "home-grown" reform initiatives as from the mid-1990s (Dodoo, 1996; Ntukamazina, 1996; Balogun and Mutahaba, 1999; and Balogun, 203).

Undoubtedly, the scope, direction and impact of public service reform vary from one country to the other. However, many of the reform programmes have the following elements in common:

- resuscitation of the basic ethos of public service – with an accent on professionalism, integrity, competence, accountability, and responsiveness of the service;
- review of personnel policy and practices (with emphasis on the review of performance appraisal instruments and mechanisms, revision of personnel rules, and computerization of personnel processes;
- rationalization of pay and grading structures and the introduction of performance- and productivity-related pay;
- labour redeployment and redundancy management
- introduction of "customer-care" initiatives;
- improvement of records and information management systems;
- revitalization of local government and decentralized agencies;
- implementation of anti-corruption measures (including the establishment of watchdog bodies such as office of Inspector General of Government in Uganda, ombudsman in Namibia, anti-

corruption commissions in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya, public prosecutor in South Africa, and mediateur de l'etat in many Francophone African countries).

The circumstances in which the reform programmes are being implemented also vary. The experiences described in this paper include those of countries emerging from conflict, and of the countries that are making an effort to build, or that have built, public service innovation into their systems.

Reform in post-conflict environment

Angola provides a good example of public service reform in difficult circumstances. Political rights were widened as part of the 1991-92 reforms that instituted a multi-party system, and guaranteed freedom of association, assembly, speech, and of the press. According to a UN Common Assessment, an adequate response to the challenges of reconstruction and long-term development in Angola requires that the underlying institutional and governance issues be quickly addressed. The 1991-92 constitutional reforms opened the way to political pluralism, and assured the citizen of the basic rights. However, the constitutional guarantees could not be effectively implemented while Angola was in a war footing. For years, therefore, popular participation in the conduct of public affairs remained highly restricted, and Government accountability to the public was circumscribed.

Besides, institutional capacity in public administration has been badly eroded since the early 1990s, partly because of the decline in the real value of salaries and the resultant impact on morale and performance, and due to "brain drain" from Government to other employing organizations. Transparency in the management of public resources was also a serious concern.

The Government has taken steps to address many of the problems discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Under the *Programa de Reforma Intitucional e Moderniza 'o Administrativa* (PRIMA) launched in 1996 with the support of UNDP, the Government undertook the following measures:

- census of civil servants;
- reclassification of all civil servants' posts;
- introduction of modern human resource management systems (as part of efforts at improving incentives and ensuring optimum utilization of qualified personnel).

In 1999, the Government went a step further by launching an Administrative Reform Programme (*Programa de Reforma Administrativa*, or PREA), the objective of which is to make public administration more effective, efficient, and responsive to the legitimate demands of the public. The Government set a target for the reduction and downsizing of the civil service (by 20% or approximately 40,000 posts) between 1999 and 2001. Although yet to be officially confirmed, it is estimated that about 8,000 have accepted early retirement packages and left the service. The challenge ahead is in raising the pay levels of those left behind so as to stem the incidence of corruption while enhancing the performance capacity of the civil service. Other key elements of PREA are:

- Strengthening the coordination and institutional and management capacity of public administration;
- De-bureaucratization and rationalization of public administration structures;
- Devolution and de-concentration to local levels;
- Re-engineering and modernization of fiscal administration at the local level;
- Re-engineering service delivery systems, with particular emphasis on the needs of the citizens;
- Promotion of civil society participation in the development process

Information management is another area of priority targeted in the on-going reform. Lack of reliable data (exacerbated by lack of coordination of fragmented data sources) impacts negatively on the programme planning and implementation process. Exercising control on budget spending is hampered by

data gaps. Even the population data is out of date – the last census having taken place more than 30 years ago!

Finally, the issue of transparency in resource management deserves greater attention than it has so far received. Budget execution reports need to be prepared, audited, and disseminated in a timely manner. The procedure for contracting external debt needs to be clarified, and the process followed needs to be open to public scrutiny.

In support of the on-going reform efforts, a number of bilateral and multilateral donors have come up with a variety of initiatives. Prominent among the external donors is the Government of Italy which, in 2000, undertook to finance a Programme Support Document (PSD) prepared under the supervision of GEPE MAPESS[2] and INAP. The programme titled, *Reforco Institucional da Administracao Publica* (REFORPA) is made up of three main components, i.e.,

- Institutional Capacity building (focusing on the role of INAP, GEPE MAPESS, and the network of training centers or units in line Ministries);
- Training (provision of administration and management courses for central, provincial, and local government personnel and other target groups/stakeholders);
- Technical assistance facility: The aim is to expose GEPE MAPESS to innovative management and service delivery systems – by placing at the disposal of the reform programme, DESA's advisory services on institutional capacity building and training, and sponsoring the participation of GEPE MAPESS and possibly INAP staff in fellowships, study tours, and staff exchange, as well as information networking programmes. Internal and external resource mobilization is a key strategy in the implementation of the technical assistance component of REFORPA.

Mozambique is another country that is forging ahead with reform under difficult circumstances. It occupies an area of 1,000 sq km and has a population of 18 million. Life expectancy declined from 43 years in 1990 to 42 years in 2001, and HIV constitutes one major health challenge. The 2000 female illiteracy rate of 71 per cent is higher than the national average (55 per cent). However, the economy has in recent years been making good progress. The GDP has grown from $2,463 million in 1990 to $3,607 million in 2001, with annual growth rate reaching 13.9 per cent in 2001. This has impacted positively on the Government's poverty reduction efforts. The fast-growing sectors are services (with a value-added of 52.2 per cent of GDP in 2001), industry (25.8 per cent), and agriculture (22.0 per cent).

From 2000, the Government started receiving donor support for the formulation of a comprehensive Public Sector Reform Strategy (PSRS), the main objective of which is to transform processes and practices, thereby enhancing the capacity of the public sector to achieve the socio-economic development and poverty reduction targets set under PAPRA (poverty alleviation strategy). To assist in formulating and managing the reform process and to coordinate donor support to the process, the Government, in the same year (2000), established UTRESP, the technical unit for public sector reform. UTRESP reports to CIRESP, a ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister.

With the approval of the Strategy by the Government in 2001 and the commencement of implementation the following year, the World Bank approved a grant in support of the reform programme in 2003. In the same year, a Common Fund was established under the overall supervision of a group of donors (including the World Bank). The donor group meets regularly with the Government to discuss progress and constraints in the implementation of the programme.

The Public Sector Reform Strategy is made up of the following key components:

- improving service delivery through decentralization and institutional restructuring;

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[2] MAPESS is the Ministry of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, or, in Portuguese, *Ministerio do Administracao Publica Emprego e Sugurancao Social.*

- strengthening the policy formulation and monitoring process and capacity;
- enhancing professionalism in the public sector;
- improving financial management and accountability;
- promoting good governance and combating corruption, and
- managing the change process (change management).

Implementation is in two phases, with Phase 1 spanning the period 2002 – 2005. In 2003, the Government, the bilateral donors providing budget support (the group known as the G14), and the World Bank, reached an agreement on a Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). The Framework forms the basis for monitoring Government's efforts in delivering the PARPA (poverty reduction) objectives and simultaneously achieving a range of public sector reform objectives. Agreement was also reached on a broad range of performance indicators to track progress in the attainment of specific PSRS objectives, notably, decentralization, public service delivery, and combating corruption. It was further agreed that the review of the first year's performance should be undertaken around March 2004. The outcome of the reform programme's mid-term review is briefly reported in subsequent paragraphs.

Public service reform with innovative signals[3] and with intent to institutionalize innovation

In contrast to the countries undertaking reforms in difficult circumstances are those that have embarked on innovative reform measures. In Cameroon, the African Charter for the Public Service serves as an inspiration for the adoption of innovative practices. The Ministry of Public Service has within it an office that acts as a clearinghouse and the first port of call for those seeking to transact business with the Ministry. The rationale for this is to avoid direct contact with officers handling documents and, in so doing, to depersonalize the decision process and minimize favouritism. The new service delivery system relies on ICT, and provides for the issuance of computer reference numbers to "consumers" of the Ministry's services. The long-term aim is to extend this computer-based service delivery system to all ministries and departments. In the interim, the system provides for the storage of human resource data and information on computer disks, and the delegation of basic human resource management functions (from recruitment to pensions administration) to line ministries.

Still as part of the effort to implement the Public Service Charter, the Cameroon public service has shifted its attention to procedure simplification and rationalization. An evidence of this is the introduction of a Procedural Manual that seeks, among other things to:

- clarify rules and standardize the procedure for their enforcement and application;
- establish performance standards;
- set deadlines (or time standards) for the accomplishment of specified objectives, and/or the delivery of specific outputs.

To redeem the image of Cameroon (particularly, in light of the Transparency International's unflattering scores) the Government has taken steps to

- Introduce a National Anti-Corruption Plan;
- Set up an Ad-hoc anti-corruption Committee under the Office of the President; the Committee comprises a cross-section of Cameroon society and includes civil society representatives;
- Aggressively pursue the investigation of cases of corruption;
- Impose sanctions and penalties for proven cases of corruption.

The Government has further established an Anti-Corruption Observatory that includes judges and the police to follow-up suspected cases of corruption and to recommend appropriate action. The Observatory

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[3] The bulk of the material in this section is drawn from UNDESA, *Mainstreaming Professionalism and Ethics in the African Public Service (Proceedings of a Workshop)* held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 1 to 3 December 2004 (forthcoming).

works closely with anti-corruption units in ministries, and is empowered to operate at all levels of government.

Tanzania is another country that has taken concrete measures to promote innovation by strengthening public service ethics and accountability. In fact, against the backdrop of the challenges associated with the transition from one-party rule to a multi-party competitive system, the issues of ethics and professionalism had engaged the attention of the Government prior to the adoption of the African Public Service Charter. The Charter's adoption in 2001, however, provided greater impetus towards the construction of an ethics infrastructure - one that meets the contemporary standards of good governance.

Tanzania's response to on-going challenges began with the establishment of a legal framework within which to combat corruption and promote the cause of public service professionalism. Specifically, the Government enacted the Prevention of Corruption Act (which, among other things, extends protection to whistle-blowers), the Public Service Act of 2002 (that places high premium on professionalism, competence, and integrity in public service recruitment), and the Joint Negotiated Machinery Act that serves as a forum for ironing out labor-management differences. The inauguration of a Performance Management System (with emphasis on performance contracting, open performance appraisal, and merit rating) further reinforced the actions taken in recent years to promote ethics and professionalism in the Tanzanian public service.

Other measures instituted in support of professionalism in the Tanzania public service are the implementation of a major public sector reform programme, the establishment of appointments committees to screen the qualifications of candidates for vacancies and promote the cause of merit in the selection process, introduction of mechanisms for performance monitoring (as part of performance management), implementation of performance-related remuneration as well as contributory health and pension schemes, and the involvement of external stakeholders in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of public services. As a matter of fact, each ministry has a Client Service Charter that is meant to involve the client in the ministry's programme.

Besides establishing mechanisms for venting (and responding to) public grievances and complaints, the Government of Tanzania has enlisted the support of the educational system as well as the print and the electronic media in enlightening civic and private sector organizations about acceptable methods of transacting business with, and/or accessing the services provided by, government agencies. The Global Distance Learning Centre's role is particularly critical to the success of the Government's efforts at disseminating good practices in public integrity and at sensitizing civil society to its own responsibilities and obligations.

To coordinate the various anti-corruption initiatives, and monitor implementation progress and constraints, a *Good Governance Unit* was established in the President's Office. The Unit works closely with anti-corruption Focal Points in the Centre for Human Rights, the Ethics Secretariat, and the Anti-Corruption Unit.

The Namibian public service's commitment to quality service began in earnest on the attainment of independence. The Government played its part by creating the necessary enabling environment and developing an appropriate legislative framework. For instance, in 1990, the Government enacted the Public Service Commission Act which empowered the Commission to advise the President on issues of public service recruitment, remuneration, discipline, performance, and conduct, among others. This measure was further consolidated with the enactment of the Public Service Act of 1995. The Act bars public servants from engaging in other remunerative pursuits outside their public service employment without due authorization, that is, the authorization of the Prime Minister.

The Ombudsman Act of 1990 is yet another evidence of the Namibian Government's determination to construct a solid ethics infrastructure. Together with certain constitutional provisions, the Act mandates the Ombudsman to investigate complaints against arbitrary and/or improperly motivated acts in the public service, and to grant remedies for any harm occasioned by such acts.

The Anti-Corruption Act of 2003 went further to provide for the establishment of a body to investigate cases of corruption brought against any one operating within Namibian national boundaries. The body is also expected to take measures to preempt corrupt tendencies in the public service and in the private sector.

The Public Service Code of Conduct, as its name implies, sets a uniform standard of conduct for public servants, and by so doing, instructs them on the types of behaviour that are (or are not) consistent with their status as public employees.

Building on the foundation laid by the Government, the Namibian public service proceeded to implement a programme aimed at improving public service delivery standards and inculcating ethical and professional norms in the average civil servant. The core elements of this programme are:

- the adaptation of the African Public Service Charter to Namibia and its incorporation in domestic statutes;
- the reproduction of the Charter in an abridged form (the Charter was summarized into one page to make it accessible to public servants and civic groups);
- the establishment of an Efficiency and Charter Unit in the Prime Minister's Office whose mandate includes collaborating with Offices, Ministries and Agencies on the elaboration of Charters in various functional areas;
- the introduction of service delivery initiatives in Offices, Ministries and Agencies;
- the launching of a Multimedia National Awareness Campaign aimed at disseminating the contents of the public service Charters among civil society and private sector organizations;
- the publication of a Government Service Directory (setting out the range of services the Government provides, and directing the "customers" or "consumers" of the services to the appropriate offices/desks;
- the implementation of Customer Service Training programmes (aimed at introducing service delivery agents to the essence of their jobs and the "customer relations" skills needed in carrying them out);
- the inauguration of a major project on the Public Service's Performance Management System (that seeks, among other things, to involve stakeholders in the determination of programme priorities, link strategic planning to performance planning and monitoring, revitalize personnel processes and practices, trigger changes in attitudes and behaviour, and promote impact- and productivity-consciousness in the public service);
- the implementation of the Project on pilot basis in the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development, and Labour;
- the launching of the National Integrity Promotion Programme (under which each Government agency works closely with the private sector, research institutions, and other stakeholders to monitor the relevance of policy instruments, and, through the adoption of sophisticated expenditure tracking techniques, follow the trail of public spending; and
- the establishment of an "Open Line" that allows citizens to engage Government Ministers in a dialogue and participate in Q & A sessions focusing on citizen concerns about the quality and standards of public services.

Although referred to last, South Africa has recorded one of the most impressive achievements in public service innovation in Africa. Indeed, if any country has institutionalized public service innovation, it is South Africa. Guided by the slogan "Batho Pele" (meaning People First), the public service has implemented a variety of initiatives aimed at responding to the needs of citizens and non-citizens alike. The *Directory of Public Services* published (and periodically updated) by the Department of Public Service and Administration is a testimony to the Government's concern for the welfare of South Africans and as well as of foreigners who come in daily contact with the public service. For a prospective "consumer" of public service products, the index to the Directory is where to begin to look for assistance. It does not matter whether one is interested in the plight of abandoned or abused children, adopting animals, fixing burst pipes, or approaching the Constitutional Court. The index will guide the client to the appropriate page

containing details of the service provider. Even refugees from outside South Africa can expect relief from the Directory when faced with the question where to go to have certain problems solved.

A publication jointly released in 2003 by the Department of Public Service and Administration, the Centre for Public Service Innovation, and the State Information Technology Agency (CPSI, 2003) further catalogues the innovations that have been introduced in the delivery of public services. These include the "Smart Service" or Gateway Service Points, the "Smart Plug-in", the M-/Mobile Services", the "Talk-to-Government" model, and the "Computerized Counter Services". Taken together, the innovations bring to the citizen the benefits of advances in information technology.

To the examples cited above, can be added many others in Africa, including the successful implementation of strategies and programs of decentralized governance that have strongly facilitated the participation of the citizens in the management of their local affairs, enabled them to call to account their local leaders, and generally brought governments within the proximity of local populations. Decentralization has been fairly successful in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, and Ethiopia.

However, with the introduction of the New partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD), there is need to examine these reforms, successful as they may have been, in order to determine the extent to which they have positioned the governments to implement NEPAD at national level.

II.   Governance Reform and NEPAD Challenges: the Lingering Issues

The reform initiatives described in the previous reforms have undoubtedly produced changes of great moment. However, a good number of these initiatives are likely to fall short when held to the NEPAD governance standards. The sticky point, as far as governance reform is concerned, is how to build a consensus around some enduring socio-political values and traditions. According to the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance (AHG/235 (XXXVIII), a landmark document adopted at the inaugural Summit of the African Union (AU) in Durban, South Africa in July 2002, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union agreed "to work together in policy and action" in pursuit of the following objectives:

- Democracy and Good Political Governance;
- Economic and Corporate Governance;
- Socio-Economic Development; and
- African Peer Review Mechanism.

To subscribe to the NEPAD Declaration on democracy and political governance, therefore, a country would, among other things, have to:

- Reaffirm commitments to the promotion of democracy and its core values and undertake to enforce these;
- Renew its determination to enforce the rule of law, and protect the rights and liberty of the individual;
- Affirm belief in just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life and undertake to combat and eradicate corruption;
- Commit itself to increased efforts in restoring stability, peace and security in the continent, seeking speedy solutions to current conflicts and acquiring conflict-prevention capacities;
- Undertake to do more to advance the cause of human rights in Africa, with special reference to the plight of women and children and vulnerable groups in conflict situations;
- Accept as a binding obligation to ensure that women have every opportunity to contribute on terms of full equality to political and socio-economic development.

In effect the implementation of NEPAD at national level requires that governments redefine the missions of public administration to align them with the objectives and goals of NEPAD. Governments need to rediscover the civilizing mission of public administration as the guiding star in their reform. This

would refer to the following: strengthening government's capacities to safeguard personal security and property, ensuring community survival, making improvements in the lives of everyone without regard to ethnic origin or religious belief, providing for the needy and the weakest sections of society, and ensuring appropriate socialization of future generation to enable them pursue the ideals of liberty and the good life no matter how it is defined. These elements can be summed up in one conceptual basket of ensuring "human security". Looked at from this light, the achievements of public service reform such as highlighted above become inadequate.

There is no doubt that in pursuing the lofty ideals of NEPAD, countries would have to reckon with major obstacles. Political turmoil and civil strife for one constitute a serious hindrance not only to political development but also to economic growth in a few countries. Notwithstanding the significant progress made in entrenching good governance practices, conflict poses the most difficult challenge to the state construction endeavor in Africa. As noted by an observer, the continent witnessed at least 80 violent changes of government between the 1960s and the 1990s (Adedeji, 2000:3). In the first quarter of 1996, 50 per cent of SSA countries enjoyed a measure of stability and the benefits of good government, while the remaining 50 per cent were embroiled in either prolonged political crises or armed conflict. By the end of 1998, the situation had changed dramatically, with only 39 per cent (i.e., 19 countries) enjoying stable political conditions, 23 per cent (11 countries) facing political crises and turbulence, and 38 per cent (18 countries) engaging in armed conflict or civil strife.

With regard to the NEPAD Declaration's poverty alleviation objective, the evidence available indicates that the "democracy dividends" expected from governance reforms will take some time to materialize. The 3.2 per cent real GDP growth rate achieved in 2000 is an improvement over the negative growth rates of the 1990s, but is still well below the 7 percent needed to improve overall standards of living and achieve the MDG targets. While the macro-economic reforms undertaken in the last twenty or so years are beginning to stabilize the economies of the region and to place them on a path of self-sustained growth, it will a few years of macro-economic and fiscal discipline before these economies could generate the resources needed to reduce poverty.

Angola's experience illustrates the difficulties associated with governance reform. The 1992 Constitution provides for presidential elections every five years, and parliamentary elections every four years. Candidates from rival political parties could stand for both presidential and parliamentary elections so long as they met the eligibility criteria. However, due to the prevailing state of emergency, elections have not taken place since 1992. The war having come to an end in March 2002, an atmosphere conducive to the conduct of free and fair elections would seem to have prevailed.

The parliament, as presently constituted, faces serious handicaps as it attempts to perform its legislative and general oversight functions. Under the 1992 Constitution, it comprises 223 deputies – with 130 elected on national lists, 90 on provincial lists, and 3 by Angolan communities abroad. However, parliament lacks research and documentation facilities, and access to vital information. The opposition remains largely weak and divided. Between 1992 and 1997, parliamentary opposition consisted of no more than 21 deputies who belonged to 10 splinter groups. UNITA's decision to join the Governo de Unidade e Reconcilia o Nacional (GURN) in April 1997 brought life to parliamentary debates, but when the country slid back to war in 1998, and with the UNITA parliamentary bloc increasingly fragmented, opposition voice in parliament became muffled.

Public bodies with external accounts (e.g., *Empresa Nacional de Diamantes de Angola*, or ENDIAMA) need to be constantly audited and the audit reports tendered for further scrutiny by parliament. The divestiture programme also needs to be transparent. When the Government began the privatization programme (with the establishment of *Gabinete do Redimensionamento Empresarial*, GARE) in 1987, the legal and procedural framework was weak. During the early 1990s, large numbers of small state companies, including state farms, were divested, as well as some of the urban housing that had earlier been nationalized in the wake of the settler exodus in 1975. During the initial wave of privatization, "there were no proper valuations of companies and properties to be privatized, many of which were handed to their new

owners for nominal payments. The process was non-transparent, as there was no competitive bidding" (UN Common Assessment).

Democratic and representative local government is still work in progress in Angola. Article 146 of the 1992 Constitutional Revision Law empowers each territorial body to pursue its peoples' interests, and to have a representative and autonomous local government to be known as autarquias locais. However, the Constitution is silent on the relation between this elected body, and the administrative arm of the state, that is, org'os administrativos locais (provided for under Article 147).

In any case, and notwithstanding the high-level commitment to change, the local government law is yet to be enacted, and the autarquias locais have not been established. Meanwhile, local governance in Angola remains the responsibility of officials operating at the provincial, municipal, and communal levels. These officials are less accountable to local communities than they were under the one-party system which required provincial commissioners (the predecessors of the current 18 provincial governors) to take account of the views expressed by deputies in the Provincial Peoples Assemblies. By the way, the Assemblies were dissolved in 1992, and they have not been replaced. The provincial governors are Presidential appointees, and they answer to the central government rather than to the local communities.

Provincial budgets are not passed by elected assemblies, but are directly negotiated with the Ministry of Finance. The *unidades* or *amentias* (provincial budget management units) are responsible for inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral allocations, and they are not obliged to clear these allocations with sector ministries. The consequence is that key ministries (health, education, etc.) no longer exert any direct influence on provincial level budget allocations, even within their sectors, and have no means of engaging the provinces in any meaningful dialogue on sector-wide planning and programming.

At the sub-provincial level, 163 *munic pios* and 532 *comunas* are mere extensions/departments of provincial governments. The administrators of the municipalities and the communes are appointed by provincial governors to whom they are accountable.

If the pace of governance reform in Angola was slowed down by conflict, Zambia's case could only be explained in terms of the problems encountered making a transition from a one-party dominant state to a multi-party democracy. While ethics mainstreaming practices vary across Southern Africa, Zambia's approach raises issues of general interest[4]. In the early years of independence, and particularly with the adoption of humanism as the ideology of the United National Independence Party (the ruling party), corruption was not seen as a major threat. It is true that the huge parastatal sector was poorly managed, and ridden with favoritism and patronage. The sector's inefficiency was plain for all to see – as reflected in declining per capita GDP, commodity shortages, and the frequently long queues for "mealie meal" (the staple diet).

As a result of civil society pressure, the erstwhile one-party state gradually opened up. Under the banner "Time for Change", the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) swept the 1991 polls and replaced UNIP as the ruling party. In its early years, the MDD government focused attention on the reform of state institutions and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. However, rather than bring corruption under control, privatization appeared to have entrenched it, particularly, as Zambians watched the sale of public enterprises at rock bottom prizes to highly placed government functionaries and their cronies. MMD's second term was marked with allegations of grand and petty corruption.

In an effort at redeeming the image of the country, the Government has, in recent years adopted a number of measures. Prominent among these are:

- The establishment of an anti-corruption body with powers to prosecute offenders (However, the powers are to be exercised under the supervision of Parliament, and regardless of the efforts made to-date, favoritism persists);

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[4] UNDESA, Mainstreaming Professionalism and Ethics in the African Public Service (ibid).

- The establishment of a high-powered commission on human rights;
- The strengthening of the Auditor-General's Office;
- The implementation of a Public Service Reform Programme (with emphasis on right-sizing and professionalism);
- The redesign of performance appraisal instruments;
- The introduction of civil service examinations;
- The organization of induction training courses, and other human capacity building initiatives (including special programmes for Permanent Secretaries and tailor-made ethics training courses);
- The improvement of archiving and information management system;
- The involvement of stakeholders in the work of public administration.

Building an enduring coalition for good governance: the key

The sticky point in many cases is how to build a consensus around some enduring governance values and traditions. For instance, while the NEPAD Declaration as well the constitutions of the various countries contain elaborate provisions on citizenship rights, it is not unusual to find elements within civil society making utterances and/or engaging in actions that seek to abrogate the rights of others. Until civic and political leaders reach a consensus on the essence of the state and of citizenship, these elements would continue to cite ethnic, cultural, and religious differences as a justification to claim for themselves liberty that is not consistent with liberty in a democratic and plural society.

III.   **Public Administration Innovation and the NEPAD Challenge**

Just as contemporary reforms have not completely succeeded in closing the credibility gap in the broad governance sphere, they have yet to fully address the concerns in public sector management. The results of the perception surveys and desk studies released by the ECA in October 2004 indeed highlight a generally negative perception of the role of the public service. The ECA study noted in particular that in many African countries, perceptions of the accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the public service were generally poor.

The African Public Service: Bridging the Performance and the Perception Gap

According to the ECA study, corruption was seen by households to be rampant in the police (60 per cent of the households), among tax officials (42 per cent), in the top echelons of the judiciary (40 per cent), and in the ranks of public prosecutors (38 per cent). Elected councilors (26 per cent) and traditional rulers (26 per cent) were perceived to be equally corrupt, even if less so than any of the preceding categories of public functionaries.

Perceptions of the efficiency of government service delivery systems varied across countries, with the Namibia scoring high relative to The Gambia, Cameroon, and Kenya. The same applies to the proportion of expert panelists who believed that the citizens have "very little or no respect for the integrity of the civil service". The proportion of panelists with this negative view was highest in Ethiopia (close to 80 per cent), median in Benin (43 per cent), and very low in Namibia (17 per cent).

With regard to appointments, promotions, and career development of public servants, a relatively high proportion of expert panelists contacted by the ECA researchers felt that merit was rarely applied in Tchad, Ethiopia, Niger, and Kenya, in contrast to Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, Botswana, Uganda and Senegal where public service personnel decisions were becoming increasingly anchored on merit. According to the ECA study, Gabon, Nigeria, Egypt, and The Gambia stand somewhere in the mid-point of the merit continuum.

Case by case review of reform efforts: Angola

As noted earlier, Angola is one of the countries that have placed high emphasis on the reform of the public service. However, it still has to address a number of issues associated not only with the reform

process, but also the circumstances in which the public administration system operates. In the 1990s, the civil service grew by leaps and bounds – that is, in terms of employment, and number of government agencies. Civil service employment grew by almost 50% between 1990 and 1998 – from 131,178 to 195,786. If the armed forces and the police are included, the number on public payroll will be in the neighbourhood of 350,000. Growth has been most noticeable at the level of the administrative and auxiliary staff that together accounted for 73% of government employees in 1998.

Also, for as long as the war lasted, the bulk of civil servants were deployed to secure areas of the country, particularly, Luanda, leaving public administration exceptionally weak in many other areas.

Between 1987 and 1997, the number of ministries increased from 22 to 29, that is, by 38%. There is also a large number of autonomous public agencies. By 2000, there were 92 such bodies, including 17 autonomous funds (MAPESS, 2000). Overlap and duplication of responsibilities, and waste of resources were the naturally corollary of the expansion. Another outcome was the rapid erosion in the value of staff salaries. This has resulted in growing cases of moonlighting. To make ends meet, civil servants have had to hold down more than one job at a time. Lowly paid teachers in government schools provide private tuition, or teach in private schools. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and paramedics report at private clinics at the end of the official working day.

The inverse relationship between the numerical strength of the civil service, and the quality/competence of officials is yet another issue that warrants urgent attention. A census of public employees undertaken in 1998 reveals that most Government employees had low qualifications: with only 3% with university education, and only 16% with secondary or technical education (MAPESS, 1999). And government has to struggle to keep the few graduates on its payroll, considering the competitive salaries offered by the private sector, particularly, the multinational oil corporations, as well as the international organizations, and NGOs.

The *ad hoc* response to the combination of declining pay and brain drain is the use by the Government of non-salary benefits, such as official cars, residences, Christmas bonuses, special shopping entitlements, per diems for official travel, medical evacuation, and scholarships. However, only the senior cadres enjoy these fringe benefits. The mass of government employees, particularly, those involved in the delivery of services to the public, are left out.

Petty corruption is the price to be paid for not the failure to give sufficient attention to the economic needs of service delivery agents. This category of public officials demand gasosas (bribes) for services such as the enrolment of children in schools, treatment at public health facilities, and for the issuance of identity cards, passports, drivers licences, business permits, and other documents. In other cases, officials receive gasosas in lieu of payment of fines, taxes, fees, or charges – thus diverting public revenue to private coffers. The acceptance of gasosas is increasingly regarded as "normal". In 1998, a survey of civil service personnel found that 74% of administrative staff and 67% of technical staff saw nothing wrong with receiving presents for services rendered (UNDP, 1998).

Raising civil service salaries, according to the UN Common Assessment, would not break the Angolan Government's budget. Recent salary increases raised the share of personal emoluments of total Government expenditure from 5% in 1999 to a mere 10% in 2000, and 16% in 2001. This still compares favourably with the world average of 17%. At any rate, less than 50% of the expenditure on personnel in Angola is for the civil service: only 44% in 1999, and 49% in 2000 went to the payment of staff salaries (MINFIN, 2000).

Assessing the costs and benefits of reform: Mozambique

Mozambique's situation is slightly different from that of Angola. Unlike the latter, the former has undertaken a mid-term review of its reform programme. The review of Mozambique's reform programme in fact took place from 15 March 2004 and lasted three weeks. It was carried out by a Consultancy Team

(comprising three members of the 'core team', one gender specialist and another specialist on HIV/AIDs and decentralization, and two additional resource persons)[5].

The review was constrained by the selective coverage of reform themes, and the relatively limited depth of analysis. However, the Team is convinced that "the main findings are sufficiently robust, not least because they confirm existing conclusions reached by UTRESP and others, and they provide adequate pointers to modifying work plans through to the end of 2005…."[6] Accordingly, based on the results of analyses of secondary material, and of inputs from donor and Government sources, the Consultancy Team was able to identify modest achievements and obvious shortfalls in performance.

In general, the Team noted that progress was slower than planned, even though performance varied from one component to another. It captured the situation as follows:

"There are components where little progress is evident and there are many
indicators across all components which have not been achieved"[7].

Measured against each indicator, the attainment of the five key reform objectives fell behind by at least 18 months. Among the reasons cited for the slippage are the following:

- UTRESP took longer than expected to be established as an effective, resource-endowed unit – one capable of stimulating the reform process across agencies, and consolidating gains; it was, in fact, not operational until the first quarter of 2003;
- UTRESP took an equally long time developing operational procedures acceptable to donors, and did not complete action on this crucial aspect of its work until 2003;
- Comprehensive funding for the PSRS started only in 2003;
- The Strategy took long to establish a presence, gain a momentum, establish a degree of credibility, and raise awareness about its role through a process of dynamic engagement with the ministries;
- The reform agenda became suddenly crowded with the Government's unilateral decision to shift from piloting to instant restructuring of all 22 ministries (this strained UTRESP's capacity almost to breaking point).

The hits and the misses in Mozambique's Reform Programme

The Team noted that two key objectives under the decentralization were fully met – that is, deepening and replication of participatory district planning and financing approach, and approval of the Law on Local State Organs (LOLE) as well as production of a draft bye-law and piloting in 30 districts. Other key decentralization reform objectives were yet to be attained.

With regard to the functional analysis of ministerial objectives and mandates, the original intention was to focus on 3 pilot ministries. The Government subsequently decided to include all 22 ministries with a planned completion date of August 2003. The deadlines were not met, except in one Ministry (Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MIC). While most ministries produced draft outlines of their restructuring plans, these plans were not based on rigorous analysis (of opportunities, challenges, programmatic feasibility and fiscal affordability).

The reform programme's performance as regards one crucial element (enhancing professionalism in public sector) was described by the Team as "disappointing." A gender strategy was not adopted, and revision of Sistema da Carreira e Remuneracao (Career and Remuneration System) was delayed. Training of HRM specialists in all ministries in the operation of personnel database (SIP) did not take place, and neither did the training of other HRM specialists.

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[5] See UTRESP, *Consultants' Report on Implementation Progress*, May 2004
[6] ibid., para. 1.9
[7] ibid., para. 2.1

Progress is evident as regards efforts at the development of the national training system in public administration (SIFAP). The system is currently running with two Regional Administrative Training Insitutes (IFAPAs) and around 800 students enrolling on the 3-year course. Short-term training courses have also been organized for approximately 420 participants. However, the target of 40 per cent female participation in all training programmes has not been achieved in all provinces. Besides, ISAPA is not yet functioning, and distance learning has not commenced. There are also concerns about the quality of the training programmes, and the sustainability of standards.

The Team noted that progress in achieving the objectives of the component on promoting good governance and combating corruption was slower than planned "with no results achieved other than the mobilization of the governance and corruption survey. Anti-corruption units in the Attorney-General's Office have been established in Maputo and Beira. However, investigation/prosecution capacity is limited, and the Office is frequently faced with the challenge of prioritization. The 130 cases received in 2003 were investigated "to varying standards", but none has been successfully prosecuted. The international anti-corruption conventions and protocols (particularly, the UN, AU and SADC) have not been ratified by Mozambique. An anti-corruption law was enacted by Parliament in late 2003, but the President declined to promulgate it because it was found to be unconstitutional. In any case, no concrete anti-corruption strategy could be expected to be in place until 2005 – after the elections.

The lack of progress in the anti-corruption effort has been replicated in the judicial sector. Not much has been done to prepare an integrated strategy for the reform of the sector, bring about changes in electoral laws and procedures, and reform the Parliamentary Secretariat.

The management of the reform process has lately bounced back from lethargy. After a slow start, UTRESP is, to all intents and purposes, up and running. It is now headed by an experienced Director, and it has moved to raise its profile and visibility in public sector reform and possibly, donor, circles. Much of its recent accomplishments could be attributed to the dedication of UTRESP management and support staff, the assistance received from national and international consultants, the readiness to fund Phase 1 of PSRS, and UTRESP's access (via CIRESP) to political leadership.

Lessons from mid-term review of Mozambique's Reform Programme

The Team felt that the generally slow progress needed not be lamented, since it accorded with international experience. Besides, the original targets turned out to be too ambitious. All the same, the Team highlighted a few lessons that could be drawn from Mozambique's three-year experience in public sector reform. It noted the following in particular:

- Human capacity is critical to the success of reform efforts (and skill shortages militate against the realization of reform objectives);
- Commitment to reform should be shared by all stakeholders and should remain consistent over time;
- Leadership – political and managerial – is essential to the attainment of reform objectives;
- Effective management of the change process hinges on effective communication and equally effective management of expectations;
- Reform processes involving a wide range of stakeholders are difficult to manage and coordinate – for the simple reason that priorities vary from one stakeholder to another;
- The involvement of donors adds to the challenge of reform focus, and of change management and coordination;
- Differences in capacities and willingness to participate in the reform across ministries most frequently translate into uneven performance. It is therefore advisable to embark on a strategy that identifies and encourages likely 'winners' while not losing sight of those in need of special attention;
- Managers of public sector reform projects face the risk of concentrating too much on processes, and ignoring the more important issue of service delivery impact and outcome.

IV.   Governance Reform and Public Administration Innovation: Role of Leadership

In any case, the entire reform and innovation agenda requires the attention of the leadership class, by which is meant, civic, political, government, and public service leaders. At the very least, these leaders need to come to an understanding on how to "reinvent" the existing socio-political cultures before proceeding to reinvent government. The issues that this paper have raised – issues around which the leaders have to build a consensus - are the role of the state, the social inclusiveness of public policy, "customer-satisfaction" or service quality, ethics and professionalism, human resource capacity building, acquisition and optimum deployment of ICT capacity, and establishment of public administration networks. The issues are briefly restated in the subsequent paragraphs.

Solving the peace and development equation: the role of the state revisited

In the past two decades, and in response to the fiscal and macro-economic difficulties facing many developing countries, governments were obliged to implement stringent structural adjustment programmes (SAP). The key measures taken under SAP include massive currency devaluations, the privatization of state enterprises, the withdrawal of subsidies and price controls and budget rationalization. The enemy then was Big Government, and the desired alternative was a "lean and mean" state.

Minimalism might be good for business, but it was on the poor that the lean and the mean state vented its frustrations. In order to balance the budget and stabilize the economy as prescribed under SAP, governments reduced allocations to the health, education and other social sectors. With the expenditure cut backs comes large-scale retrenchment of staff, reduction in access to services, and decline in service delivery standards.

In re-inventing government for the challenges of NEPAD, the penny-pinching state has to give way to the *compassionate state.* If the NEPAD commitments are to be met, it is appropriate that the gun-butter issue be placed on the policy agenda so it could be publicly debated. In the course of the open dialogue, all the principal stakeholders would have an opportunity to express an opinion on the *minimum and proper* role of the state. This is certainly more satisfactory than confining the dialogue on such a critical public policy issue to the meetings of technocrats.   The issue here is; to whom should the last word in the nature, quality, and performance of government belong? It is the view of this paper that the last word should belong to the citizens who are the consumers of the action and products of the government. This perhaps should constitute the most critical principle of re-inventing government[8].

Towards a pro-poor and inclusive governance environment

The inclusion of the poor in decisions affecting them will not happen overnight, and certainly, not until a few conditions have been met. For a pro-poor policy environment to emerge, the entire political system must be reconstructed into one that listens to, rather than, muffle, the voice of the poor and the disadvantaged. As part of the environmental transformation process, the underlying political and constitutional issues of representation (as well as of recall) must be resolved; the electoral law, regulations and practices must be critically reviewed; the legislative oversight and debating capacity must be enhanced; and the judiciary must be seen as an even-handed dispenser of justice rather than the agent of the rich and

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[8] "But who can not see, in such conditions, the negative consequence that would result from the fact that the last word in the affairs of the State is purely a monopoly of the technicians of the organization? Non, the last word belongs to those who see in the State a living entity, a normal emanation of human nature, to those who administer, on behalf of the State, not man but the affairs of the country, in such a way that individuals will never be suffocated by the weight of State administration, neither in their private lives nor in their social lives……….May the last word, the decisive word, in the administration of the public good, belong to such men" : Pope Pius XII speaking to the delegates of the Congress of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) in Rome, Castel Gandolfo, on 5 August 1950. (see http://www.iiasiisa

the powerful. The executive branch, for its own part must not be above the law, but must always act within constitutional and statutory bounds.

Civil society bodies and the emerging political parties have a vital role to play in ensuring that the key state institutions (the legislature, the judiciary and the executive) respect the letter and uphold the "spirit" of the constitution. It is up to these bodies to perform the watch-dog, advocacy, and policy analytic tasks that are critical not only to the survival of democratic polities, but also to the safeguard of the rights and liberties of the people – particularly, of the poor and the disadvantaged clusters. By acquainting themselves with the NEPAD vision and ensuring that the priorities are "mainstreamed" in government policies and programmes, civil society organizations would have reaffirmed their position as the defender of the weak.

Nurturing the capacity to deliver services and respond to citizen demands

Public administration's contribution to the attainment of the NEPAD objectives will further be greatly enhanced if it acquires and nurtures the capacity to deliver quality service to its clients. Quality service must of necessity begin from within – with staff and support units responding to the "line" agencies' demand for essential services such as timely recruitment of personnel, supply of working tools and equipment, prompt settlement of legitimate claims, and management of motivation and incentive schemes. The minimum conditions for quality service would have been met if and when public administration's internal "housekeeping" matters have been satisfactorily handled. Thus by equipping, empowering and motivating service delivery agents, governments would directly be enhancing the capacity of public administration to offer the human welfare and development services featuring prominently under NEPAD.

Naturally, governments would have to go beyond providing an enabling environment for quality service. If public administration is to be reconfigured into a reliable agent of NEPAD implementation, it would have to develop a "customer-service" ethos in place of the patron-client, rent-seeking tendencies that have militated against the development of economies in different parts of the globe. Fostering a customer-service orientation requires, at the minimum, acquainting government agencies with citizen preferences ("customer demand"), mobilizing the resources needed to satisfy *legitimate* demands, empowering the managers *and the entire work force* to respond to the demands, and establishing performance indicators and standards (Balogun, 2003:*43-57*). Among the measures that could be applied in assessing the performance of public administration agencies associated with NEPAD are:

- access to service (how soon and at what cost can the citizen expect to get connected to water supply points, electricity, health facilities, police protection? etc.)
- speed/promptness of service (length of time it takes to deliver mail, investigate crime, or apprehend criminals; tonnage of refuse disposed in an environmentally friendly manner in a day);
- simplicity of service procedure (number of decision layers and signatures required to obtain service; logic and sequence of operations; range and complexity of form-filling involved);
- hosting facilities (atmosphere prevailing in the service perimeter; availability of waiting rooms and toilet facilities; heating/cooling facilities);
- courtesy and politeness of service providers (attitude, countenance and general disposition of service delivery agents);
- accountability and responsibility for action (credibility of internal fault-reporting and investigation mechanisms);
- responsiveness (how quickly broken pipes are fixed, and the length of time it takes to connect household and industrial consumers to electricity);
- transparency and due process (measures instituted to eliminate double standards, and open decision processes to scrutiny);
- adequacy and reliability of information (are there help desks, information/inquiries centers, office and telephone directories, service delivery flow charts, and guides to procedure?)
- equity (are the rules, regulations and processes currently in place fair, or are they loaded against a particular group of clients?)

- security and dependability (what are the chances of checks, money orders, or parcels sent through the postal system reaching the intended destinations? Are security installations in electronic modes of communication fool-proof?)[9].

Promoting public service integrity, ethics and professionalism

As hinted in the preceding paragraph, quality service is not simply a matter of drawing boxes and moving employees from one to another, or even of exposing them to new management "skills" and techniques. Enhancing the quality and standard of service is also about attitude change - that is if "behaviour modification" sounds too frighteningly Orwellian. The public, especially the poor, would in all probability welcome an era in which they could receive the services to which they are entitled without having to cringe before, bribe, or exchange favours with, public officials. There is at any rate a more serious reason for looking forward to zero-tolerance of corruption. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has estimated that close to 1 trillion US dollars are extorted annually by corruption from legitimate business (http://www.unodc.org/unodc/speech_2004-04-30_1.html). This predatory tendency not only discourages legitimate wealth creation pursuits, but also takes away the resources (the whole trillion) that the economy needs to finance pro-poor services.

It is gratifying to note that African governments are beginning to address in a serious manner the issue of public integrity. A number of governments have taken firm measures to promote integrity in governance, focusing attention on the leading administrative organs, judicial bodies, law enforcement departments, and economic management units that are vulnerable to corruption. The governments have pursued cases against high-ranking officials while dealing with important public concerns such as illegal collection of fees, unlawful creation of check points, and irregular fines.

The initiatives taken to promulgate public service charters and codes of conduct also deserve to be acknowledged. For instance, the vision and the leadership provided by the Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers led to the adoption in February 2001, of the Windhoek Declaration and the African Charter for the Public Service. The challenge ahead is reaching out to sub-national cultures with a view to building a consensus around a set of public service values – notably, those of professionalism, political non-partisanship, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

Revitalizing institutional and human capacities

The success of the NEPAD-related measures outlined in the previous paragraphs (implementation of pro-poor policies, launching of "customer-service" initiatives, and enhancement of public service professional and ethical standards, etc.) hinges on the efforts that governments make to maintain a proper balance between the institutional and the human aspects of public administration. As the third session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration rightly observed, surmounting the obstacles to the realization of the MDGs requires, at the minimum, addressing the underlying institutional questions such as the entrenchment of good governance ethos and practices, enforcement of the rule of law, promotion of equity and equality, and building the capacity to pre-empt strife and to foster peace and security (United Nations, 2004b).

Since MDGs (and in this specific case, NEPAD) are conceived in programmatic (rather than "project") terms, their successful implementation hinges on the extent to which state institutions and their civil society partners are able to apply holistic intervention strategies in place of the "sector" approaches they were used to. This dictates a radical change in mindset – change from bureaucratic "turf protection" to teamwork, and from narrow departmentalization and agency flag-waving to interdepartmental (joint) programming.

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[9] Balogun, M J., 2003, "Making Performance Real – Customer-based Initiatives in the Public Sector in Africa", *African Journal of Public Administration and Management*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 1 and 2, January and July 2003

It should be noted that, institutions are as good as the human beings that operate them. Therefore, while giving due attention to the *mechanics* of institutions (e.g., the legal and constitutional provisions on each institution's mandate, internal hierarchical and horizontal relationships), it is essential that the design of institutions take into account the *organic* aspects. It is this later (the organic) set of attributes that gives each institution its unique character and determines its goal-attainment capacity. The organic attributes include, but are by no means limited to, the knowledge, skill, attitudes and, above all, the *character* of the interested parties – particularly, the individuals responsible for managing the institutions' affairs as well as civil society actors that are brought into direct or indirect relationship with the institutions. By focusing on the human dimension – particularly, the motives and the actions of individuals – it is possible to determine whether an institution would serve the interest of the poor or use the language of the poor simply as a cover for pro-elite programmes.

Undoubtedly, the seriousness with which the underlying institutional issues are confronted will, to a large extent, limit human choices and determine responses to situations. Just as it is difficult to imagine an institution that runs itself without human intervention, so it is futile to contemplate circumstances in which institutions would be left entirely to the whims and caprices of human beings. Accountability under the rules – and to values that mirror the interest of the poor - is therefore critical to the success of efforts at repositioning public administration systems for the NEPAD challenges.

It is also essential that the special needs of countries emerging from conflict be fully acknowledged in institutional reform and capacity building efforts. Reform may in fact not be what public administration in this class of countries need. Where institutions have been completely destroyed by civil strife and military operations (e.g., Rwanda and Somalia) the focus has to shift from "reform" to "reconstruction", and from revitalization to laying the foundation for the re-energization of institutions and processes (Kauzya, 2003).

To be specific in terms of making more radical improvements in the situation of human resources in the public service and to unlock its potential for supporting the implementation of NEPAD, African governments would do well to give serious consideration to the following basic steps:

- **Institutionalize merit-based civil service system**: Governments may need to focus their efforts on strengthening merit-based career civil service systems before embarking on more complex reform, such as devolution of management and/or introduction of a position-based system. The main characteristics of such a civil service system would include the following: job security for civil servants and protection from political interference; a legally defined civil service cadre with common terms and conditions; strict application of the merit principle in recruitment and promotion; and career development to avoid nepotism.

- **Increase investment in strategic human resources management:** Recent research findings clearly demonstrate that investment in effective human resources management can make a decisive contribution to improving public sector performance. Empirical studies suggest that investment in human capital in the public sector is more likely to enhance the effectiveness of government than downsizing. Furthermore, in a competitive labor environment, characterized by changing demographics and rapid turnover, governments will increasingly have to develop effective strategies to recruit and retain a fair share of the best talent.

- Take action on the 'positive agenda' for Human resources, whose elements include strengthening recruitment on merit, developing internal promotion and paying competitive wages: The 'negative agenda' of reducing wage bills and cutting jobs has dominated the actual practice of governments (and also of private companies in industrialized countries) through most of the 1980s and 90s. Yet it is the 'positive agenda', , that has the most potential to improve government performance, 'knocking on' to better conditions for public or business organizations and ultimately to increased national prosperity.

- **Improve labor relations and diversity management in the public service:** By giving public servants the chance to participate in decisions which affect them and through

measures showing that government is harnessing the talents of all its employees, women as well as men, including disadvantaged ethnic, religious and other groups. This is something that governments should do, and many of them are indeed doing so, because human dignity is a noble objective in itself, but also because it is in this way that governments will get the best return on the human capital in the public sector. However, the creation of a more representative civil service should not be at the expense of qualifications, expertise and experience.

- Frame reform programmes that are politically feasible, given the interests of different governance stakeholders, in the public, private, and civil society sectors: Governments should conduct an explicit analysis of the views of stakeholders, capitalizing on their support where it exists, but also taking account of the opposition of others, whether by winning them over through dialogue, finding ways of circumventing their opposition or modifying a programme where stakeholder opposition cannot, or perhaps should not, be overcome.

- Adopt a holistic approach to Human resource management reform and enhance the influence of Human resource managers in organizational decision-making processes: Considering that the achievement of organizational goals is largely determined by the quality of the human capital, human resources managers should play a more influential role in corporate decision-making processes. Workforce analysis and planning is also becoming a critical part of strategic management of the human capital in public sector organizations.

- Build strong leadership commitment to Human resource management reform: Governments should make a voluntary, explicit, public and irrevocable commitment to a challenging programme of human resource reform. They should also follow a flexible and participatory approach to reform that focuses on enhancing the quality of the human capital rather than reducing the number of civil servants. Both politicians and senior officials should play a 'hands-on' leadership role in improving HR, seeing reform through to implementation by exercising transformational leadership skills.

Acquiring the information and knowledge management capacity

The role of public administration in implementing NEPAD would further be enhanced if Governments institute measures aimed at transforming public administration systems into knowledge networks and "learning organizations". This requires, at the minimum, constructing the information and communication infrastructure which would enable public service organizations to acquire "cutting edge" knowledge in their fields of operation, and to keep up with developments that are likely to affect their ability to accomplish on-going and strategic objectives.

Effective implementation of NEPAD particularly depends on the ability of public service organizations to collect, process, store, and retrieve critical development information – especially, information on macro-economic trends, programme accomplishments, budget allocation patterns relative to declared priorities, performance constraints, resource flows, good practices and/or failed experiments in programme implementation within and across countries.

The United Nations on-line Public Administration Network (UNPAN) offers a wide scope to public administration systems that are earnest in their desire to share knowledge and information with their counterparts in different parts of the world. Since its inauguration over five years ago, the Network has served as a hub for the exchange of vital data on governance and public administration.

Building development partnerships and public administration networks

Partnerships are critical to the attainment of good governance objectives and the realization of the NEPAD objectives. The starting point in partnership building is the integration of non-governmental, community-based, and other civil society organizations in governmental decision structures and processes.

It is only by institutionalizing civil society participation in decision making that the concerns of the poor could be mainstreamed in public policy and programmes.

Partnership building is nonetheless fraught with risks. In the absence of appropriate safeguards, a decision framework founded around national and local community partnerships may be hijacked by powerful interests, and, in the process, diverted from its original pro-poor objectives. Similarly, at the international level, unequal partnerships in trade and finance can lead to an unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of interactions. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the partnerships that emerge at both the national and the international levels truly reflect the aspirations of the weak and the disadvantaged parties.

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