

UNITED NATIONS
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Public Economics
and Public Administration

CAFRAD
African Training and Research Centre
in Administration for Development

African Public Service: New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics

Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service
Hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, in Rabat, 13-15 December 1998

Notes

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Foreword

As globalization is impacting our life in different ways across the world, the State may be losing some of its traditional functions to supranational and sub-national institutions. At the same time, advances in communication, technology and science are changing our way of life in a manner that is totally unpredictable. If we want Africa to be part of the process and to benefit from it, among other actions, Africans and their Governments have to influence their own future by taking decisive steps to enter into the new millennium as full-fledged participants. An enabling environment for business and investment can only happen if there are public institutions in place that facilitate opportunities for the private sector and civil society. In this regard, the initiative taken by the African Ministers of Civil Service at their Second Pan-African Conference, held in Rabat in December 1998, has to be highlighted as a step in the right direction.

The African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) is one of the regional institutions which the United Nations has helped to create and supported over many years to become a forum for exchange of experience and a capacity-building institution in public administration for the region.

Governments in Africa have made full use of it to have many of their civil servants trained. While CAFRAD has suffered in the last ten years from the negative impact of restricted funding either from international organizations or its Member States, I note with pleasure that under its more recent leadership, it is becoming a more and more sustainable institution at the regional level. This is also why my Division has selected CAFRAD as one of the three regional Centres for the United Nations Electronic Network on Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN). This will hopefully be one of the ways to bring modern technology and communication to Africa. It has to be a two-way process, whereby Africa will not only benefit from other experiences outside the continent, but also be able to show its success stories to a world audience.

The Report of the Conference in Rabat is one of such outputs which will show the world that Ministers of Public Service in Africa, through the Rabat Declaration, have made a strong commitment to reinforcing professionalism and ethics in their public services. The most recent drafting of a Charter for Public Service in Africa, which has already been adopted by a Ministerial Group representing eleven African countries is a sure sign of a clear determination to take action.

The Charter will be presented for final approval at the Third Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, to be held later this year. I want to salute here the successful collaboration which has made all this progress possible between CAFRAD and the Government of Morocco and our Division. This has resulted in bringing public administration and its pivotal role to the fore in all sustainable development efforts in the region. Finally, I want to thank all the Member States who have participated actively and at the highest level in this event. I also wish to acknowledge the hard work of the experts and the staff of CAFRAD, the Government of Morocco and my own Division. The building of capacity for human resources in the public sector is one of the key strategies for bringing Africa within the concert of nations and closing the gap between the rich and the poor.

Guido Bertucci

Director

Division for Public Economics and Public Administration

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Preface

The Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, held in Rabat, was a major event for African administrations. The topic chosen for this Conference—the Civil Service in Africa: New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics—generated a lot of interest. The objective of raising awareness in the international community to the problems that confront the civil service in Africa was achieved.

The important changes that emerge today give rise to a new debate on fundamental issues linked to professionalism and ethical values in the public service. They are certainly worthy of consideration by African countries. The Rabat Declaration, which this Conference adopted, was a strong message addressed to the international community, as well as to the African countries. It stressed the necessity to regenerate professionalism and promote ethics in African administrations.

In today's circumstances, we want to re-affirm our strong will to encourage modernization and reform in our respective administrations and to reinforce professionalism and ethical values in the public service. Development and mismanagement cannot go together. It is, therefore, time for the issues of ethics and transparency to be our first concerns if we want to successfully implement our administrative policies. Facing economic, social, technological challenges, among others, our administrations are called upon to develop new perceptions and to be more selective in their actions, as well as more effective and efficient in the accomplishment of their missions. No matter what the gravity and nature of the problems from which our administrations suffer, whatever the social and cultural constraints to which they may be subject, nothing can diminish the necessity for administrative systems to deal with the issue of ethics. The institution and consolidation of relationships of trust between administration and citizens and the development of new relationships with the private sector will undoubtedly help create an enabling environment for our administrations to contribute decisively to development efforts. Striving to include an ethics policy in African administrative systems and to instill new behavioural patterns in the African cultural heritage will certainly contribute to the creation of new relationships between these systems and the international environment.

Various cases of irregular behaviour on the part of civil servants, not only in countries in transition but also in developed countries, remind us strongly that administrative embezzlement and lack of ethics are world-wide phenomena. In

recent years, many countries have undertaken efforts to endow their public service with a code of conduct and to assess the behaviour of officials and public agents accordingly when designing and implementing public policies.

To avoid marginalization, the African continent has now given itself the means to meet this challenge: a Ministerial Group of 11 African countries was created following the Conference of African Ministers of Civil Service, with the mandate to draft a Charter of Civil Service for Africa. In light of the consensus reached, a document will be submitted for adoption at the next Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service.

This African initiative has been supported by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It demonstrates that the African States are willing to face their responsibilities and to find solutions adapted to their cultural heritage in order to fully participate in world affairs and share in all the benefits of the globalization era.

This undertaking has been based on the exchange of experiences and the harmonization of views, as well as efforts among our countries, to meet the challenge of development and to establish the conditions for our public administrations to uphold professionalism and ethical values.

H.E. Mr. El Houssine Aziz

*Minister of Civil Service and Administrative Reform
of Morocco and*

President of the Governing Board of CAFRAD

Executive Summary

The decision to focus the theme of the Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service on the image of the African public service was taken at the First Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service held in Tangier, Morocco, in 1994. Besides expressing concern over the decline in the professionalism and prestige of the African public service, the Tangier Declaration emphasized the need for measures to reverse the generally negative trends and strengthen the performance and morale of public servants in Africa.

Recalling the Tangier Declaration, the Governing Board of the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) at its 36th Meeting held in Tangier, Morocco, 30 June-1 July 1997, reiterated that the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration is an essential component of the development efforts of African countries.

The Governing Board further considered resolution 50/225, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, as a milestone of Member States' intention to enhance the quality of public administration to face the challenges of globalization, change and interdependence.

The Governing Board felt that Africa, having inspired the holding of the resumed 50th session of the United Nations General Assembly, had a special interest and responsibility to follow-up in the most effective and coordinated manner. The Governing Board therefore decided to hold a Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service to review and assess the implementation of resolution 50/225 in the context of African countries. Moreover, this conference served to explore strategies to reinvigorate the African public service and reposition it for the challenges of the 21st century. This Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service took place in Rabat, Morocco, between 13 and 15 December 1998. It was hosted by His Majesty King Hassan II's Government and organized jointly by CAFRAD and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A total of 34 countries, 22 international organizations and 7 observers participated in the Conference.

The Pan-African Conference served as a forum for discussion, exploration and cross-fertilization of experiences and ideas among ministers and leading experts in the field. Its objectives were to:

- Explore and explain the changing role and image of the public service in Africa;
- Consider measures to rejuvenate leadership and to reinforce professionalism;

- Affirm ethical values, standards and management tools to enhance integrity and combat corruption.

The Conference was opened by H.E. Mr. Abder-rahmane Youssoufi, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco. The Prime Minister observed that the challenge ahead consisted in enhancing the professional capacity and changing the ethical orientation of the public service to take into account the increasing demand which civil society was placing on state institutions. The Chairman of the CAFRAD Governing Board, H.E. Mr. El Houssine Aziz, joined the Honourable Prime Minister in welcoming the delegates and the observers to the Second Pan-African Conference. He observed that the African continent was going through new waves—among them, globalization, economic and political liberalization and the information revolution. According to him, these changes, together with the downsizing thrusts of structural adjustment reforms, have far-reaching implications for public service management reform. At the very least, they pose serious but not insurmountable challenges in the areas of performance improvement, professionalism, ethics and accountability.

In his statement, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Patrizio Civili, recognized the growing drive towards the elaboration of universal norms to guide the public service. The Director-General of CAFRAD, Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Wali, reported on the progress made in implementing the proposals incorporated in the 1994 Tangier Declaration. He observed that while public service ethics and professionalism were critical to the success of Africa's development efforts, it was equally important that steps be taken to provide purposeful leadership and create an atmosphere conducive to efficient performance. Subsequently, the theme of the conference was introduced and discussed under three sub-themes in three sessions.

Plenary Session I—Public Service in Africa: New Challenges

The objective of the first session was to highlight the new challenges of the 21st century within the context of Africa. The complex interaction between structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and governments was explored, in tandem with the concept of "an effective State". Professor A. Ourzik's paper highlighted the socio-economic and technological challenges that

need to be addressed by the African public service. Facing up to the economic challenges requires that the public service adapt its missions and structures to the new role of the State, take due cognisance of the impact of globalization and liberalization, and institute measures aimed at improving the performance and global competitiveness of the national economy. As regards the social challenges, the public service would need to strengthen the capacity of the public institutions, and undertake activities in support of human and civic rights. The technological challenges consist mainly of how to harness the benefits, while coping with the threats, of the rapidly changing information technology.

Professor Ourzik's presentation was followed by comments by Professor Benoît Ndi Zambo. He urged the governments to adopt systemic approaches to meet the new challenges. He went on to add two additional challenges to the three mentioned by Professor Ourzik (economic, social and technological). The two additions are the cultural and the ontological challenges, both of which would be upstream from those proposed by Professor Ourzik.

By cultural challenge he meant that the public service should move from dictating and regulating to listening and being accountable with a view to meeting citizens' expectations. The ontological challenge meant that the public service should reconsider its "raison d'être". The State should have a vision and become an active actor in the context of globalization. He ended by affirming that the *status quo* was no longer an option: the future was in emphasizing solidarity and citizens' empowerment, taking into account diversity and subsidiarity.

Plenary Session II—Public Service in Africa: Professionalism

The second session looked at ways of reinvigorating leadership and professionalism in the African public service. This should be viewed in the light of the SAPs and their impact in downsizing the role of government. Guarding the senior cadres from politicization and having them be role models in upholding values such as neutrality, impartiality, merit, accountability, etc. during times of rapid government transition or power shifts was explored. The importance of training in bringing about the needed change of attitudes among key public servants and enhancing the role of professional associations, academia and other citizens' groups was also discussed.

In her presentation, Ms. Turkia Ould Daddah singled out professionalism as an area in need of urgent attention. Besides the momentous changes taking place around the globe—among them, economic globalization, trade liberalization and advances in information and communication technology—she noted that the changing role of the State entails the adoption of measures capable of enhancing the competence and professionalism of the civil service. In her view, new global challenges had rendered our previous assumptions about the structures and processes of public administration obsolete.

In conclusion, Ms. Ould Daddah stressed the need to invest in human resource development. She further advocated the institution of measures aimed at rewarding performance and at integrating public service reform with the reform of the State.

Professor Said Belbachir made pertinent comments on specific aspects of a professional administration. He noted, among other things, the importance of dialogue between the political leaders and civil servants, evaluation of performance as a control mechanism and accessibility of information to promote transparency.

The issues and challenges emerging from the discussion included: impartiality, openness, evaluation and budget control, development of capacities to negotiate, education and training for contemporary needs and future challenges.

Plenary Session III—Public Service in Africa: Ethics

The third session examined the "ethics infra-structure" and the major challenges of ethical standards. It reviewed the role of the private sector and of civil society in educating citizenry on their rights, improving public scrutiny through responsible media. Naturally, all countries must take into account their respective cultural and historical factors in choosing those strategies and approaches that are most likely to prove effective.

Specific ethics legislation, codes of conduct, special campaigns, etc. were examined. Both sanctions and rewards for sound ethical conduct were explored. Rightly the ongoing debate on public service ethics has placed a high degree of emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness, integrity, transparency and accountability, and high quality of service.

Professor Ayee's paper highlighted the difficulties in defining ethics and in evaluating ethical conduct. He compared ethics with a number of concepts, among them, morality, rectitude and a

sense of responsibility. After noting the differences in the values underpinning each notion of "good" and "bad" judgement, he concluded by viewing as "ethical" the character and conduct of an individual relative to the obligations imposed by the individual's incumbency of public office.

Minister Matembe noted that, despite codes of conduct, some civil servants continue to behave unethically because they do not respect citizens' entitlement to public service. This can be countered by strengthening the citizenry and the civil society through disseminating information and promoting civic education. A shift in paradigm to results-orientation and consultation will strengthen accountability and reduce negative conformity among civil servants. The problem of corruption itself has to be discussed freely, to bring it out into the open.

Minister Matembe also identified ways forward. First, codes of conduct must be followed. Second, the values of the people need to be reflected by governments, which should encourage African norms and standards in fighting corruption. Finally, efforts to improve ethics in the civil service should be linked to all the branches of government.

The Rabat Declaration

As a result of this Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, all member countries concerned agreed to adopt the Rabat Declaration. It was recommended that each country make a commitment and take the necessary measures to regenerate professionalism and promote ethics in its public administration by creating managerial structures, reforming civil service codes, implementing a fair system of recruitment, motivating career development and a sound remuneration system based on merit, and improving training programmes.

It was recommended that CAFRAD carry out periodic studies on public policies and programmes and promote a virtual community (through an electronic network) of public administration practitioners and scholars for the debate and exploration of relevant issues. It was also suggested for CAFRAD to support the training programmes of schools and institutes of public administration in the context of African public administration needs.

It was also recommended that the United Nations provide necessary expertise and resources to Governments and facilitate the exchange of experiences between regions on issues linked to the themes of this Conference.

**Statement by H.E.
Abderrahmane
Youssoufi**

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of
Morocco

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
I have pleasure in opening with you today this Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, and I wish to welcome all delegations representing many African brotherly and friendly countries as well as several regional and international organizations. I also express my gratitude to all those who have favourably reacted to the invitation of CAFRAD by honouring with their presence this important gathering. I would like also to express my thanks to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its valuable contribution to the organization of this Conference.

My country, Morocco, which is proud to welcome you on this African land, has always worked for the emergence of a united Africa which is strong and prosperous. Moreover, Morocco is also proud to have friendly relations with all African States, based on mutual respect and solidarity.

This Conference is being held at a crucial moment of our history characterized by gains and constraints of the 20th century and by the great challenges announced by the imminent third millennium. Only a strong, competent and efficient civil service can face such challenges. CAFRAD, which has the merit to coorganize this important forum with the Government of Morocco and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, was set up at the initiative of His Majesty King Hassan II. It was in 1962, when some African countries were still under the yoke of colonialism, that His Majesty the King entrusted his government to submit to UNESCO a resolution with the aim of creating CAFRAD. This resolution, which was supported by ten African States, was unanimously adopted during the 12th session of the General Conference of UNESCO.

By initiating the idea of setting up CAFRAD at the time, and faithful to his prospective vision, His Majesty the King wanted to endow Africa with an institution devoted to training civil servants badly needed by the various African administrations in order to bridge the gap caused by the massive exodus of administrators of the colonial powers. As a matter of fact, in the aftermath of independence, African States were confronted with the difficult task of building up their national administrative systems and hence the setting up, from scratch, of national civil services which were lacking. The undertaking was very strenuous, but the strong will of African governments and peoples succeeded in this achievement.

This Conference follows the one held in Tangier in June 1994 on Inter-African Cooperation in Civil

Service. The Tangier conference had then under-lined, in the Tangier Declaration, that "any sustainable development should be based on competent and efficient civil service." On the basis of this Declaration and at Moroccan initiative, the General Assembly of the United Nations, for the first time in its history, devoted a resumed session to the issues of public administration and development.

Resolution 50/225, adopted by consensus during that session, is of paramount importance, for it has called governments to consolidate the capacity of management of their administrations and has recommended the strengthening of the United Nations role on the issue of public administration and development. The international community was therefore called to give support to developing countries in their efforts towards adapting their civil service to the new economic, social and political challenges of the time.

Our States, like many others, are found at the core of changes imposed by the new economic, social and technological environment.

- At the economic level, globalization, trade, monetary and financial liberalization constitute the major challenges of the 21st century.
- At the social level, and although at its outset in most of our countries, civil society is building up and organizing itself, the citizen pays more attention to and is more demanding towards the public service and the private enterprise.
- Finally, at the technological level, the huge advance of information and communication are both assets and constraints of great scope.

In the face of all such challenges and of many others, the African civil service is called upon to develop new perception of issues and to be more relevant in its mission, more competent and efficient in accomplishing its tasks. Hence, the judicious choice of the topic of the conference we open today: "New challenges, Professionalism and Ethics". This is a theme which is at the core of the main elements on which action of our civil service and public communities should be based. Professionalism is to be considered with all that it should imply in terms of technical and managerial skills, and with respect to ethics and moral values. It constitutes one of the responses to new challenges and an adequate means to social and economic development.

This distinguished gathering will be keen to deal with the fundamental issue of the relationship between the civil service and the citizen. Actually, re-placing the African citizen at the heart of the civil service should be our major concern. African

administrations should be concerned with citizens' expectations and demands. This is why they should renovate their working methods and re-think in depth their relations with the citizen-users. The African citizen should no longer be considered as a mere administered subject.

This concept has been generating for a long time a crisis of trust in the relationship between the civil service and the citizen. It is high time that the African administration becomes a citizen-oriented civil service that involves the citizen in its decision-taking process and in the definition of the strategic options concerning the development of society.

This objective puts us in front of great responsibilities. Today more than ever before, we are required to think and focus on a global African approach to resolve the problems of the bringing our administrations up to the level of the developed countries. Thus, we need a unified vision and a frame of reference that emerges from our African realities in order to face very pressing challenges, such as:

- Globalization and all the commitments it requires;
- Good governance and the structural reforms it needs;
- Defining the place and the weight of the administration in our respective societies.

I wish you full success in your work and thank you for your attention.

Statement by Mr. Patrizio Civili

Assistant Secretary-General for
Policy Coordination and
Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of
Economic and Social Affairs, United
Nations

Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister, Your Excellency the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reform, Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, It is with great pleasure that I attend today the opening of this Conference of African Ministers of Civil Service as a representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations secretariat. First of all, I want to thank the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Morocco as well as the officials of the beautiful and historical city of Rabat for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.

Four years ago, the previous conference organized in this same country started a process which has already borne fruit. Indeed, the Tangier Declaration, adopted in 1994, was reviewed by the General Assembly of the United Nations two years later at its resumed fiftieth session on public administration and development. Resolution 50/225, issued in that session, affirms in its preamble "that States have the sovereign right and responsibility to decide, within the boundaries of their own policies, strategic needs and priorities for development, how to manage their public administration based on the rule of law."

This resolution acknowledges, however, that to face the changes, which none can avoid, all States need a modern, professional, competent and efficient administration, and for this difficult task of reforming and modernizing, it will not be enough, as it used to be, for Member States to count only on their own resources and experience. Obviously, one of the first consequences of interdependency and technical progress is an ever-more pressing need for a certain convergence in methods, procedures and means used in any public administration. Everywhere, more and more, there are increasing sectors of activities where governments have to adopt compatible means in order to accelerate and facilitate global communication and cooperation.

Let me, however, stress here that the growing drive towards the elaboration of universal norms to guide public service does not stem only from the technical requirements of globalization. It stems from the growing realization that there are some fundamental principles that must guide relations between State and society, irrespective of political systems. Hence, the emphasis, in the resolution I just mentioned, on respect for the rule of law and on transparency and responsibility. In a major report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa, recently issued at the request of the Security Council and strongly supported at the current

session of the General Assembly, the United Nations Secretary-General has identified good governance as one of the cornerstones for building durable peace and promoting economic growth in the continent. He has highlighted respect for human rights and the rule of law, democratization, the promotion of transparency and accountability in public administration and the enhancement of administrative capacity as the main—and integrally related—components of good governance.

The Secretary-General has also pointed to an environment in which individuals feel protected, civil society is able to flourish and government carries out its responsibilities effectively and transparently, with adequate institutional mechanisms to ensure accountability, as key conditions for progress—in Africa as, indeed, throughout the world. These are, obviously, also the challenges before public services today, as we enter the 21st century.

Placing public administration squarely within the framework of the advancement of human rights and good governance also points to its key role for the promotion of development. Development *is* a human right; it is the principal long-term objective of all countries in Africa, and an efficient and transparent public administration is a key means to that end.

In recent years, in the face of an economic environment changing at an unprecedentedly fast pace, we all—governments and international organizations alike—have learned many lessons—very fast. One such important lesson is that, while coping with the new world requires a higher degree of efficiency and greater selectivity in determining those areas of human endeavour that are best pursued by the public sector, those who sought to marginalize public administration were simply wrong. Public service is essential, perhaps as never before. But it must be a public service that meets the highest professional and ethical standards. And what these standards imply in the new world of globalization and modern technology poses heavy demands and involves new challenges that we must all join hands to understand and meet.

While there are many questions to which we must still find the answers, the basic economic framework within which these demands and challenges must be met is becoming increasingly well established. The basic strategies for achieving sustainable development through economic growth are now widely understood. They include a reliance on the private sector as the driving force for growth. They do, however, also encompass, as

core components, macro-economic stability and a sound investment environment geared to integration in the international economy; long-term foreign direct investment; adequate investment in key human development areas, such as health and education; a fair and reliable legal framework; and the maintenance of basic physical infrastructure. Quite simply, creating a positive environment for investment and growth, and ensuring that priorities and distribution decisions focus on basic human needs and are geared to combatting poverty in all its manifestations is not possible without a vibrant, modern, people-oriented public administration. Herbert Simon, the American Nobel Prize Winner, put it very well when he said:

"Whatever the rhetoric about 'bureaucracy', organizations are not the enemy. They are the most effective tools that we humans have found for meeting human needs. But for their effectiveness to grow, we need, at all levels of talent, the kind of commitment, sense of responsibility, and the organizational identification that we see in the careers of myriads who have devoted their lives to the public service."

And it is essential that the spirit of selfless public service be nurtured not only among current professionals but also with future generations. This was the main message that Secretary-General Kofi Annan chose to give at a World Youth Forum that gathered in Portugal last August, immediately before a World Conference of Youth Ministers. He said,

"In this changing world of new challenges, we need, more than ever before, dedicated and talented individuals to enter public service. More than ever before, we need people like you, sitting here today, to make the choice of service to humankind. It is not an easy choice to make. Some of you may be put off by the perceived weakness of public institutions of our day; some of you may be tempted by the immediate gains offered by the private sector. To the first, I would say: joining a winning team is an easy option. It is precisely when an institution, a cause, is struggling to find its way that it needs the support of the best and most courageous people. To the second, I would say: the reward of working in the service of humanity goes far beyond material gain; it is the reward of knowing that one person—you—can truly make a difference."

The United Nations, as you can see, regards its contribution to the objectives that have led to the present conference among its main objectives. It

works towards the building of consensus on basic principles to guide policy development; it works with other organizations to provide advisory services and technical cooperation and to help define common standards to facilitate mutually reinforcing efforts and communication; and it works as a catalyst for countries to share experiences and lessons learned. We are keenly aware that, while standards must be consistently high, every country must find its path to achieving them; that no country or system has all the answers, but that we can all learn from each other. It is conferences such as the present one that can help all advance, though perhaps in distinct ways.

What appears clearly is that it is urgent to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service to face the challenges of development in the next century. To this end, we have to reinstill value—reinvest—professionalism, including ethical values of civil servants. The attendance at this meeting of so many high-level participants from all African regions and countries is a clear sign of the political will of decision-makers to open together the path to achieve this goal. The United Nations system, particularly the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, will continue to be as always at your service to support your efforts.

I wish you full success in your deliberations.

Introduction

Background

The decision to focus on the image of the African public service was taken at the First Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service held in Tangier, Morocco, in 1994. Besides expressing concern over the decline in the professionalism and prestige of the African public service, the Tangier Declaration emphasized the need for measures to reverse these generally negative trends and strengthen the performance and morale of public servants.

Recalling the Tangier Declaration, the Governing Board of the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) at its 36th Meeting held in Tangier, Morocco, 30 June-1 July 1997, reiterated that the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration is an essential component of the development efforts of African countries.

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The Governing Board felt that Africa, having inspired the holding of the resumed 50th session of the United Nations General Assembly, had a special interest and responsibility to follow-up in the most effective and coordinated manner. The Governing Board therefore decided to hold a Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service to review and assess the implementation of the resolution 50/225 in the context of African countries. Moreover, this conference served to explore strategies to reinvigorate the African public service and reposition it for the challenges of the 21st century. While the choice of the theme could directly be traced to the 1994 Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, the image of the African public service is a subject which has acquired importance of its own, over the years.

There was a time in the past when the public service was a highly prestigious institution, and when a job in it conferred on the incumbent varying degrees of authority, reasonable economic security and an enviable social status. The tangible and intangible benefits of office were a fair indication of the importance and respect accorded to the public service in the then new nations of Africa.

The situation is different today. The influence once commanded by public officials has been watered down, either by political forces or by structural adjustment reforms. The economic

security, which was an attraction in public service employment, is to all intents and purposes a thing of the past in many countries. The public esteem or status of the average government employee has fallen to an all-time low, due to the bad publicity attracted by the growing incidence of ethical violations. At the same time, the privatization thrusts of structural adjustment reforms are raising the profile of the private sector and luring away competent public servants.

An indication of the public services' descent is the stagnant or decreasing budget allocations to government programmes, the increasing tendency towards downsizing and the consequent decrease in career opportunities, the transfer of resources from the public to the private sector and the general public perception of government as wasteful, unproductive and corrupt.

What are the causes and the consequences of public administration's decline in the esteem of both the officials and the public they were supposed to serve? The "withering" of this institution, once vibrant, has been attributed to political interference, the implementation of cost-cutting structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and the global shift from a state-led development strategy to reducing that role, among other factors. However, it has been argued that one of the causes of the public administration's troubles, particularly within the African context, is its inadequate response to the challenges confronting it.

There is no doubt that the steady politicization of the public service undermined not only the professionalism but also the competence of the service. However, some will argue that by failing to uphold the tenets of professionalism, the career service itself opened the door to political interference.

Political interference in public administration took different forms—ranging from the outright politicization of the senior cadres of the public service to the dilution of merit principles with a political loyalty criterion in staff selection, discipline and promotion. This political interference did incalculable damage to morale and professionalism, but so did the officials' failure to resist personal or political temptations when confronted with professional choices. The SAPs are symptomatic of the decreasing faith in the capacity of government to sustain its development role. As part of the reforms undertaken to weather economic storms and reduce internal and external deficits, the SAPs entailed scaling down publicly managed programmes, reducing public expenditure,

privatizing state-owned enterprises, eliminating subsidies and price controls, devaluing currencies, and de-regulating the economies.

The impact of the SAPs has been to call into question the credibility of government by down-sizing basic needs programmes and to undermine the morale and *esprit de corps* of the public service. This is indeed an issue of paramount importance facing contemporary public administration systems in Africa today—the credibility of government as an institution that can, in return for its authority, be counted on to place the interest of the disadvantaged groups on the public policy agenda.

It is not just that the economic activities have been "privatized" in contemporary Africa. Priority programmes which, in the past, defined the very essence of government (e.g. education, health, environmental sanitation and pollution control, water supply, energy generation and distribution, crime control and infrastructure rehabilitation programmes) have suffered from almost total neglect. Yet, the future of the African economies hinges largely on how quickly the decline in the role and perception of the public service can be arrested. A new spirit of leadership, professionalism and ethics must be infused in the rank and file to increase performance and improve the image of the public service.

As noted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/225 of 1996, public administration still has a vital role to play in the development process. In addition, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Meetings of Experts of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (held respectively May-June 1997 and May 1998) reaffirmed the role of the State in socio-economic development. To discharge this role adequately, the meetings stressed the need for public administration systems to be reinforced in terms of their professional knowledge and skills, ethical values and standards, and competence base. From the African perspective, restoring the prestige and credibility of the public service is a necessary first step to turning around the battered economies of the continent.

Of significance is the fact that even the advocates of liberalism have come to the realization that the success of structural adjustment reforms depends primarily on the effectiveness of governmental institutions. The 1997 World Development Report, *The State in a Changing World*, acknowledges that: "An effective State is vital for the provision of the goods and services—and the rules and institutions—that allow markets to flourish and

people to lead healthier, happier lives. Without it, sus-tainable development, both economic and social, is impossible."

The challenge ahead lies in revitalizing the public service which was badly jolted by down-sizing and restoring the confidence of public officials which, after years of government-bashing, seem to have eroded. How to proceed in undertaking this complex task was the theme of the Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service.

The objectives of the Conference

The Pan-African Conference served as a forum for discussion, exploration and cross fertilization of experiences and ideas among Ministers and leading experts in the field. Its objectives were to:

- Explore and explain the changing role and image of the public service in Africa;
- Consider measures to rejuvenate leadership and to reinforce professionalism;
- Affirm ethical values, standards and management tools to enhance integrity and combat corruption.

The theme of the conference was introduced and discussed under three sub-themes in three sessions as follows:

Session I—

Public Service in Africa: New Challenges

Presenter: Professor A. Ourzik;

Discussant: Professor B. Ndi Zambo

Session II—

Public Service in Africa: Professionalism

Presenter: Ms. T. Ould Daddah;

Discussant: Professor S. Belbachir

Session III—

Public Service in Africa: Ethics

Presenter: Professor J. Ayee;

Discussant: Ms. M. Matembe

Focus of the sessions

The objective of the first session was to highlight the new challenges of the 21st century, within the context of Africa. The complex interaction between structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and governments was explored, in tandem with the concept of "an effective State" as defined in the above-mentioned World Development Report. What part is the public service expected to play in building this "effective State"? Specifically, in the light of these emerging challenges for 21st century Africa, the following questions were explored:

- What mix of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and standards is required (e.g., versatility and general culture or specialized

knowledge, entrepreneurialism or strict adherence to rules)?

- How to secure that mix in a highly competitive market (recruitment, retention and remuneration criteria)?
- How to maintain a high level of commitment and develop or upgrade capacity among public service professionals (new policies for typical state careers)?
- How to develop both decentralized and integrated models for human resources management in the public service?

The second session looked at ways of reinvigorating leadership and professionalism in the African public service, especially in the light of the SAPs and their impact in downsizing the role of government. Guarding the senior cadres from politicization and having them be examples in upholding values such as neutrality, impartiality, merit, accountability, etc. during times of rapid government transition or power shifts was also explored.

Specifically, the discussion raised the following questions:

- Is professionalism possible without a measure of professional autonomy?
- Is professionalism possible without neutrality?
- Is public service neutrality possible, or indeed desirable, under modern conditions of governance?
- "Public choice" or "public needs"—which must public servants work for?

Related to the above is the narrowing gap between the public and private sector, which is both inevitable and desirable. What are the implications for the public service professional? What are the challenges and how can they be met? Training is one important strategy required to bring about the needed change of attitudes among key public servants. Enhancing the role of professional associations, academia, and other citizens' groups in assisting the public service to maintain its professionalism was also discussed.

The third session examined the "ethics infrastructure" and the major challenges of ethical standards. It reviewed the role of the private sector and of civil society in educating citizenry on their rights, providing public scrutiny through responsible media. Naturally, all countries must take into account their respective cultural and historical factors in choosing those strategies and approaches that are most likely to prove effective.

Specific ethics legislation, codes of conduct, special campaigns, etc. were examined. Both sanctions and rewards for sound ethical conduct

were explored. Rightly the ongoing debate on public service ethics has placed a high degree of emphasis on:

- Efficiency and effectiveness;
- Integrity;
- Transparency and accountability;
- High quality of service.

However, are these enough? Is there not also a place for fairness, objectivity, open-mindedness, responsiveness, compassion and, more than anything else, a sense of public service, commitment to democracy and to the rule of law? Combatting corruption and crime is but one facet—albeit a major part—of building and reinforcing a code of professional ethics into the public service, and this is predicated on raising the morale, self-image and prestige of public service professionals.

The overall objective of the Conference was to come up with a report that would faithfully reflect the current situation and concerns in Africa and produce recommendations for rebuilding the professional core, capacity, performance, integrity, ethical standards and image of the African public service. This was achieved by the adoption by general consensus of the Rabat Declaration. (See p. 24.)

Part 1:

**Proceedings of the
Second Pan-African
Conference of
Ministers of Civil
Service
and the Rabat
Declaration**

**Proceedings of the
Second Pan-African
Conference of
Ministers of Civil
Service**

Formal opening

The Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service took place in Rabat, Morocco, between 13 and 15 December 1998. It was hosted by His Majesty King Hassan II's Government and organized jointly by the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. A total of 34 countries, 22 international organizations and 7 observers participated at the Conference.

In a welcome address, H.E. Mr. Abderrahmane Youssoufi, the Honourable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Morocco, noted that the Conference was taking place at a crucial point in Africa's history—i.e., at a time when Africa, like the rest of the world, is in the process of weighing the gains and the constraints of the 20th century while facing up to the challenges of the next millennium.

The Hon. Prime Minister recalled the critical issues raised at the 1994 Pan-African Conference held in Tangier and expressed delight at the fact that the Declaration adopted at the Conference was largely instrumental in ensuring the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 50/225, which besides reaffirming the role of public administration in development, identified areas in which the African public service would need the assistance of the international community. The Prime Minister observed that the challenge ahead consisted in enhancing the professional capacity and changing the ethical orientation of the public service to take into account the increasing demand which civil society was placing on state institutions.

In his own statement, the Chairman of the CAFRAD Governing Board, H.E. Mr. El Houssine Aziz, joined the Honourable Prime Minister in welcoming the delegates and the observers to the Second Pan-African Conference. According to him, the Kingdom of Morocco was proud to follow up on the tradition of hosting conferences devoted to African development themes. The CAFRAD Chairman reflected on the multi-dimensional, socio-economic and technological, questions discussed at the 1994 Pan African Conference. He observed that the African continent was going through new waves of change—among them, globalization, economic and political liberalization and the information revolution. According to him, these changes, together with the down-sizing thrusts of structural adjustment reforms, have far-reaching implications for public service management

reform. At the very least, they pose serious but not insurmountable challenges in the areas of performance improvement, professionalism, ethics and accountability.

In view of the fact that the performance of the civil service had generally fallen below the expectations of political leaders and of civil society at large, he said it was essential to adopt measures likely to restore the confidence of the people in the competence, efficiency, and integrity of public officials. This indeed is the rationale behind the choice of the theme of the Second Pan-African Conference— "New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics".

Before concluding his remarks, the CAFRAD Chairman described the civil service reform programme being implemented in the Kingdom of Morocco. The core elements of the reforms are:

- Strengthening administrative delegation of authority to local levels;
- Rationalizing and modernizing human resource management;
- Reforming and modernizing civil service legislation;
- Adapting regulations to the missions and tasks of public administration; and
- Drafting and implementing a Good Governance Charter—with emphasis on ethics, simplification of procedures and communication.

In his statement, the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Patrizio Civili, recognized the growing drive towards the elaboration of universal norms to guide the public service. As recognized in resolution 50/225 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, all countries need a modern, professional, competent and efficient administration in the development of their nations.

In a major report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of sustainable development in Africa, recently issued by the Secretary-General, good governance was identified as one of the corner-stones for building durable peace and promoting economic growth.

All governments and international organizations, however, have learned an important lesson in an environment which is changing at an unprecedented pace. The new world requires a higher degree of efficiency and a greater selectivity in determining those areas which are best pursued by the public sector. Public service, therefore, is essential, as never before. But it must meet the highest professional and ethical

standards. And it must continue in a spirit of selfless service to the public, not only among current professionals but also with future generations. The United Nations is keenly aware that though standards must be consistently high, each country must find its own path to achieving them. In this endeavour, conferences such as the present one can help all advance through an exchange of experience and knowledge.

Director-General of CAFRAD, Dr. Mohammad Ahmad Wali's statement focussed, among other things on the importance of the Conference theme. The CAFRAD Director-General noted that the theme of public service ethics and professionalism was being accorded increasing attention all over the world. This, according to him, is due to the increasing awareness that precipitated declines in ethical and professional standards constituted a threat not only to political stability but also to sustainable development. The Director-General further reported on the progress made in implementing the proposals incorporated in the 1994 Tangier Declaration. He was delighted to note that, in line with one key suggestion under the Declaration, many African countries began from 1995 to celebrate the Africa Day of Administration and Civil Service. For its own part, CAFRAD had worked out modalities for the establishment and administration of an Award for Excellence in Public Administration and Management. The Centre's Governing Board had also approved a proposal for the launching of an Exchange Programme, under which senior public servants would serve for between one and two years in civil services other than that of their own country.

Another major landmark in CAFRAD's history is the decision to publish an annual report focussing on best practices in governance. The indicators that would be applied in assessing progress and constraints in the area of governance include the rule of law, human rights, accountability, transparency, administrative capacity, decentralization, gender policy, public-private partnership and globalization trends.

On the specific theme of the 1998 Conference, the CAFRAD Director-General observed that while public service ethics and professionalism were critical to the success of Africa's development efforts, it was equally important that steps be taken to provide purposeful leadership and to create an atmosphere conducive to efficient performance. He expressed the hope that the Conference would come up with ideas aimed at restoring the shattered image of the civil service

and at repositioning the public service for the challenges of the next millennium.

Country presentations

Ministers and delegates from various countries made presentations highlighting their experiences in tackling problems concerned with the promotion of the image of their public services in order to be prepared for new challenges emerging in the 21st Century. Everywhere efforts are being deployed to re-tool, re-engineer and re-focus public administration towards increased productivity, enhanced accountability, greater transparency, governance and better delivery of services to the citizens.

Important efforts are also being undertaken to enhance the human resources potential in the public sector in order to come up with a new profile of civil servants, working in an enabling environment and with determination to bring about change in a newly dynamic and reformed administration.

Public service in Africa: new challenges

Professor Ourzik's paper highlighted the socio-economic and technological challenges that need to be addressed by the African public service. Facing up to the economic challenges requires that the public service adapt its missions and structures to the new role of the State, take due cognisance of the impact of globalization and liberalization, and institute measures aimed at improving the performance and global competitiveness of the national economy. As regards the social challenges, the public service would need to strengthen the capacity of the public services and undertake activities in support of human and civic rights. The technological challenges consist mainly of how to harness the benefits, while coping with the threats, of the rapidly changing information technology. Despite the drastic measures adopted as part of structural adjustment reforms, the African public service is still being criticized by an increasingly mobilized and highly demanding public. More than ever before, and despite resource shrinkages, the public service is under pressure to find innovative solutions to wide-ranging socio-economic problems—unemployment, deterioration of educational and health facilities, worsening housing conditions and decaying infrastructure. In other words, the contemporary public service finds itself in an unenviable position of having to do more with less. This underscores the importance of one resource—the human resource.

The economic challenges alone are of such a magnitude as to call for new capacities. An example is the capacity to anticipate and plan for the consequences of matters which, in ordinary circumstances, tend to be beyond local control. Even if structural adjustment had not taken its toll, anticipating the consequences of globalization and trade liberalization would have strained the capacity of the public service to a breaking point. Yet, going by the prevailing orthodoxy, the public service is under increasing pressure to shed its "excess" fat. Instead of engaging in direct productive activities, the public service has to be content with providing an "enabling environment" for growth.

According to Professor Ourzik, the key to the puzzle lies in a judicious allocation of resources, a new preoccupation with value for money, and an accent on the timeliness, impact, results and quality of service delivery.

It is Professor Ourzik's view that in responding to on-going and unfolding challenges in the socio-economic and technological fields, the public service needs to give due thought to the following measures, among others:

- Acquisition and constant application of strategic planning and management capacity;
- Conduct of management audits with a view to rationalizing organizational goals/mission statements and revalidating or renewing mandates;
- Systematic dismantling of highly centralized and inflexible structures, and establishment in their place of citizen-oriented, productivity and performance-based structures;
- Elimination of bureaucratic red-tape, unjustifiable road-blocks, cumbersome procedures, and growth-stifling controls;
- Enhancement of the capacity of economic cadres/agencies to open windows of opportunities for local enterprises and to discharge the vital support, advisory and information networking services;
- Design, installation and operation of a policy, institutional and legal framework safeguarding private property rights and permitting legitimate business transactions;
- Design and implementation of social safety-nets for the weakest and poorest sections of society;
- Involvement of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of programmes;
- Enhancement of the capacity of managers to evaluate performance and monitor the impact of government programmes on the beneficiaries;

- Review of the civil service's selection and promotion procedure to enable the sifting of genuine achievers from time-servers;
- Progressive adaptation of the new information technology to the needs of the public service and its diverse clientele;
- Development of strong linkages among public services, universities and research institutions;
- Sustained investment in human capacity building through in-service training; and
- Implementation of civil service pay reform (with emphasis on equity).

Professor Ourzik's presentation was followed by comments by Professor Benoît Ndi-Zambo. He agreed in general with Professor Ourzik's presentation. He urged the governments to adopt systematic approaches to meet the new challenges. He went on to add two complementary challenges to the three mentioned by Professor Ourzik (economic, social and technological). The two additions are the cultural and the ontological challenges, both of which would be upstream from those proposed by Professor Ourzik.

By cultural challenge he meant that the public service should move from dictating and regulating to listening and being accountable with a view to meeting citizens' expectations. By ontological challenge he meant that the public service should reconsider its *raison d'être*. The State should have a vision and become an active actor in the context of globalization. He ended by affirming that the *status quo* was no longer an option: the future was in emphasizing solidarity and citizens' empowerment taking into account diversity and subsidiarity.

A general discussion ensued which confirmed the challenges highlighted by the presenters. It was generally recognized that genuine efforts were already under way in most African countries to meet the new challenges identified. Consensus appeared on acknowledging the key role human resources in the public sector have to play if the States are to move forward to a new culture in the 21st century which will enable Africa to narrow the development gap.

A number of emerging issues and challenges were identified. The main ideas, however, can be summed up by reaffirming the critical role of good governance emphasizing transparency and strong political will. It was agreed generally that each State should formulate its vision and adapt accordingly the role of its public administration. The main challenge was to create an enabling environment for economic development and the struggle against poverty. The need for

empower-ing women and promoting ethics in the public service was recognized as a priority for real change. Finally, a particular point was made on the issue of representativeness of the public service and balance of power in the public service in terms of regional/ ethnic groups.

A lively debate followed with various views. It was agreed that an exchange of experiences on this subject in sub-Saharan Africa would be useful.

There was no lack of imagination in proposing ways to go forward. In reviewing the proposals which seems to meet most participants' agreement, the following were identified:

- Promoting training of civil servants for a new administration;
- Mobilizing resources for the public service;
- Implementing decentralization/ delegation of authority to local levels;
- Creating incentives to improve motivation in the public service;
- Involving civil society;
- Developing regional integration: a unified African approach and exchange of relevant experiences;
- Building capacity to harness the benefits of the information/communication revolution;
- Building capacity of training institutions (with particular reference to the changing role of the State and the increasing public demand for improved service and equity); and
- Promoting public sector partnership with the private sector.

Public service in Africa: professionalism

A presentation by Ms. Turkia Ould Daddah, Director-General of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), addressed the issue of professionalism of the African civil service. For the purpose of the presentation, she defined professionalism as the sum of knowledge, skills, attitudes and ethical orientation that a career official brings to his/her job to contribute to the effective and efficient discharge of organizational responsibilities.

With the definition as a point of departure, Ms. Ould Daddah singled out professionalism as an area in need of urgent attention. Besides the momentous changes taking place around the globe— among them, economic globalization, trade liberalization and advances in information and communication technology—she noted that the changing role of the State entails the adoption of measures capable of enhancing the competence and professionalism of the civil service. In her view, new global challenges have rendered our

assumptions about the structure and processes of public administration obsolete.

She argued in particular against the uncritical acceptance of the Weberian bureaucratic model and the logic underpinning it. In her view, meeting contemporary and future challenges necessitates the reconstruction of the civil service into a pro-active, citizen-oriented and performance-based institution. In place of a structure removed from the day-to-day concerns of citizens, there is a need for a civil service which forges strong partnerships with civil society actors at the different phases of policy formulation, implementation and review.

In any case, if the civil service is content with the *status quo*, the citizen it is going to relate to is no longer passive. The citizen is becoming increasingly demanding in terms of the timeliness, reliability, cost and overall quality of the services s/he receives from agents of the State. The citizen is no longer impressed and tends, in fact, to be infuriated by the endless hierarchical layers of authority, the formalistic attachment to rules, the retention of elaborate and time-consuming procedures, as well as the insolence of service delivery agents.

If the Weberian model no longer defines professionalism in a meaningful and satisfactory way, what does Ms. Ould Daddah substitute in the place of the classic bureaucracy which is now generally referred to as the "managerial" model? It is one that highlights the attributes of a genuinely professional civil servant, such as:

- Foresight and prevision (strategic, pro-active orientation);
- Entrepreneurship (risk-taking, innovativeness);
- Excellence/merit (constant search for perfection);
- Impact or results-orientation (focus on performance and productivity);
- Moral rectitude (responsibility, political neutrality, public spirit, accountability, equity, transparency, subordination of private/personal interest to public good).

Ms. Ould Daddah believes that the top cadres of the civil service have a major role to play in developing or strengthening the new professional ethos. She is also of the view that the ministry or agency responsible for the management of the civil service could restore the image and promote the morale of the service if it too is accorded the importance that it deserves.

In conclusion, Ms. Ould Daddah stressed the need to invest in human resources development. She further advocated the institution of measures aimed at rewarding performance and at

integrating public service reform with the reform of the State.

Professor Said Belbachir made pertinent comments on specific aspects of a professional administration. He noted that:

- Dialogue between the political leaders and the civil servants is very important for team work in administration;
- Decentralization and deconcentration lead to effective participation of citizens in decision-making;
- There is a lack of coordination between ministries and within ministries. This situation is not conducive to an integrated development process;
- The national budget should reflect the national policy;
- The evaluation of performance could be internal or external and should be seen as a control mechanism.
- Transparency is possible if citizens are informed about administrative decisions. To this effect, information should be available and accessible to the citizens at any time.

In the general discussion on the issues of impartiality, equity and neutrality, some Ministers underlined the fact that many civil servants were too politically biased to treat all citizens impartially and equitably in accordance with the law.

With regard to the relationship between public administration and citizens, the participants agreed that citizens should be considered as clients and services provided should be of good quality.

It was noted that the legal framework remains the key instrument for promoting professionalism in administration. Indeed, by clearly setting out the rights and duties of civil servants and making their professional advancement dependent on the accepted criteria of efficient performance, civil service codes offer the main guarantee of the neutrality of public servants.

The participants stressed the need to establish an atmosphere conducive to openness. It was agreed that it was necessary for political leaders to encourage their civil service advisers to comment frankly on policy and its implementation. The issue of evaluation and control was discussed. It was agreed that acceptable and effective methods must be applied for the evaluation of results and appropriate and equitable measures taken once the results are known.

Training remains the critical element if any reform is to succeed. Indeed, human resources capable of formulating, implementing and evaluating

administrative reforms in Africa are in short supply. Therefore Governments should train civil servants to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively.

While the legal and technical conditions required for the implementation of reforms are of decisive importance, there is a need for strong political will to mobilize state employees.

Globalization could be seen as something positive for Africa if the comparative advantages of Africa are clearly identified and translated into projects to be implemented.

The issues and challenges emerging from the discussion included:

- Impartiality—equity, neutrality and depoliticization for public administration;
- Openness—dialogue and transparency to develop the sense of initiative that is an indispensable element in sound management and good governance;
- Evaluation and budget control (in order to improve the performance of civil servants and make them more responsible for their decisions);
- Development of capacities to negotiate, specially within the framework of the emerging new economic order;
- Education and training for contemporary needs and future challenges: training programmes should be formulated and implemented at national, sub-regional and regional levels with a view to building critical capacities for effective management of public services and in anticipation of the challenges of the next millennium.

Administrative professionalism cannot be developed overnight. It needs time and effort from all stakeholders at national and international levels. Mentalities have to be changed for a new professional culture to take root. To this effect the following were recommended:

- African socio-cultural values have to be scrutinized to adapt them to the challenges of professionalism;
- The role and missions of States should be clearly defined taking into consideration the new challenges;
- The rule of law should be at the centre of all actions and decisions. No individual or institution should be above the law and everybody should be equal before the law;
- All posts in public administration should be clearly described and publicly announced when vacant;
- Education and training programmes for civil servants should be formulated and planned at

national, sub-regional and regional levels with the collaboration of the international community;

- Information and communication systems must be developed in order to strengthen the relationship between citizens and their public administration;
- Methods of evaluation and monitoring of civil servants' performance and the quality of services rendered should be developed, known and understood by civil servants and citizens.

Public service in Africa: ethics

Professor Ayee began his presentation by observing the importance of ethics in both developed and developing countries. The ethical conduct of public officials is crucial to the legitimacy and success of governments, good governance, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service. He noted that his paper covered five main issues:

- A definition of ethics;
- The importance of ethics;
- Ethical dilemmas;
- Strategies for promoting ethics; and
- Lessons learned for good governance.

Professor Ayee highlighted the difficulties in defining ethics and in evaluating ethical conduct. He compared ethics with a number of concepts, among them, morality, rectitude and sense of responsibility. After noting the differences in the values underpinning each notion of "good" and "bad" judgement, he concluded by viewing as "ethical" the character and conduct of an individual relative to the obligations imposed by the individual's incumbency of public office. Professor Ayee further explored conditions under which the public servant might be torn between or among conflicting ethical choices.

Circumstances posing serious ethical dilemmas include those in which the official is under pressure to balance personal goals with narrow, sectional, political, partisan and general public expectations.

According to Professor Ayee, consideration of public good provides the most reliable way of reconciling the moral dilemmas facing career officials. It is this consideration which guides official behaviour as well as conflict-of-interest situations.

He identified a number of strategies aimed at promoting ethical behaviour in the civil service. These include the enactment of ethics codes, pay reform (with emphasis on improvement in pay levels and conditions of service), rationalization and simplification of decision processes, provision for declaration of assets, elimination of functions

and/or regulations susceptible to abuse, establishment and empowerment of anti-corruption agencies, and the strengthening of the watch-dog capacity of civil society institutions (including the print and electronic media).

However, he argued that the success of anti-corruption measures at any point in time depends largely on:

- Leadership will and commitment;
- Active participation of civil society institutions (e.g. employees' associations, NGOs, religious bodies);
- Vigorous enforcement of anti-corruption legislation;
- Relentless pursuit of violators of ethics codes; and
- The credibility of anti-corruption campaigns, in general, and of anti-corruption agencies, in particular.

Minister Matembe prefaced her comments on Professor Ayee's presentation by noting the importance of a political leadership committed to justice, equality and a clean society. She reminded the participants that many of the people which the leadership and the civil service serve live in rural areas with no access to books on ethics. Instead, they need to be shown through daily actions what is the proper conduct of public officials.

Minister Matembe broadly agreed with Professor Ayee, but wanted to enrich the section on ethical dilemmas with illustrations from the Ugandan experience. She noted that although ethics is a part of everyday life, the moral fibre of society has been destroyed by war. There is a need to return to valuing human life rather than material gain, especially for the benefit of the younger generation.

Despite codes of conduct, some civil servants continue to behave unethically because they do not respect citizens' entitlement to public services. This can be countered by strengthening the citizenry and civil society through disseminating information and promoting civic education.

Administrative discretion is part and parcel of public management. However, a shift in paradigm to results-orientation and consultation will strengthen accountability and reduce negative conformity among civil servants. The problem of corruption itself has to be discussed freely to bring it out into the open. Although petty corruption can be handled by improving working conditions of civil servants, grand corruption is the real challenge.

Minister Matembe identified several ways forward. First, codes of conduct must be followed. However, their enforcement is impeded by weak

judicial and legal systems, which need to be strengthened. Second, the values of the people need to be reflected by governments, which should encourage African norms and standards in fighting corruption. Finally, efforts to improve ethics in the civil service should be linked to all the branches of government. In these efforts, she highlighted that Africa is not the only region concerned about ethics. The OECD recently adopted public sector ethics principles, showing that developed countries too face this concern (see Annex 3).

The following emerging issues and challenges were raised during the floor discussion which ensued:

- Ethics is a very important component of administrative reform and good governance programmes;
- Ethics, integrity, morality and combatting corruption are issues to be included in schools and other training programmes at all national levels;
- All levels of the civil service, from the Head of State to the lowest level, must demonstrate ethical conduct;
- In inculcating ethical conduct, the personal conscience, family and social environment, and the fear of punishment should work together to shape the behaviour of civil servants;
- To enhance transparency, potential areas of conflicts of interest, such as assets, remuneration and gifts, need to be declared;
- Civil society organizations, such as the media, churches and labour unions, need to be empowered to monitor the behaviour of public officials; and
- Civil servants need to be paid a liveable wage to reduce the temptation to abuse their offices for personal gain.

The discussion on the way forward clearly highlighted the need for concrete and practical measures to be identified and implemented to address the issues above through:

- Strengthening the legislative framework;
- Training for the public sector;
- Involving and consulting the civil society organizations; and
- Allocating and managing adequate resources to this end, among other measures.

Conclusion

Enticing themes and rich discussion made the Conference highly interesting. Participants willingly joined in a consensus to adopt the Rabat Declaration which follows. The Declaration highlights all the conclusions reached at the Conference on the three themes and makes

recommendations for future action and follow-up. Most noteworthy is the setting up by the Chairman of the Governing Board of CAFRAD of a Ministerial Group of ten African countries to draft a Charter for Public Service in Africa to be presented for adoption of all African States at the Third Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service.

The Rabat Declaration

We, the African Ministers of Civil Service, meeting at the invitation of the Kingdom of Morocco for the Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, held in Rabat, Morocco from 13-15 December 1998, jointly organized by the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), agree on the following:

Having discussed "The Public Service in Africa: New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics" through a range of issues on the effective, efficient and ethical workings of a professional civil service and human resources development within the African context;

Aware of the promising perspectives brought about by the previous conference held in Tangier, and which have created a better aware-ness on the part of the international community to the specific administrative constraints in the development of African countries;

Having taken note with satisfaction of the commitments and the efforts made as well as the initiatives taken by the different countries to implement the Tangier Declaration and resolution 50/225 of the United Nations General Assembly and having also taken note of the recommendations of the 36th Governing Board of CAFRAD held on July 1997;

Recognizing that given the political and economic changes of recent years, new responsibilities have been placed on the public administration of African countries, including:

- Adapting to the growing globalization of the economy and establishing an environment favouring the growth of the private sector;
- Ensuring not only the economic growth and the strengthening of basic infrastructures but also social development and the narrowing of increasing disparities of income and opportunities in favour of social solidarity;
- Modernizing the administrative structures through grasping new information and communication technologies while making the civil service close to the citizen and providing quality services.

Considering that to meet the multiple challenges in creating conditions for sustainable economic and social development on the eve of the 21st century, governments must be backed by a responsible, effective, efficient and responsive public administration;

Attaching special importance to the need of investing in human resources, in developing them and efficiently using them as a basis for the

consolidation of democracy, for the achievement of social progress and the reform of public administration;

Believing that:

- Effects of structural adjustment programmes have sometimes weakened the capacity of the public sector to perform its missions effectively;
- Promoting conditions which enable the civil service to attract, to motivate and to retain highly qualified individuals of great integrity and merit will create an administration that is service-oriented, complementing and drawing synergy from both the private sector and civil society;
- A well-performing and transparent public service is an essential prerequisite for private sector growth and Africa's economic recovery;

Considering that:

- The promotion of professionalism, the enhancement of ethical standards and integrity systems, including the fight against corruption in the public administration of African countries, is a key issue for the development of the region;
- The experience gained in this field in some countries deserves to be widely known and shared;
- A comprehensive African approach to cope with the new challenges and to enhance the role, professionalism, ethics and image of the public service should be defined as part of a concerted effort to revitalize public administration for economic and social development;

Reiterate our commitment for holding meetings of the Biennial Pan-african Conference of Ministers of Civil Service on a regular basis, since it provides a forum for dialogue and a step in the direction of attaining our common objectives;

Draw the attention of the international community to the current difficulties faced by and the needs of African States, with a view to increasing assistance for the development and modernization of their public administration;

Based on the above, recommend the following actions:

Each country makes the commitment and takes the necessary measures to regenerate professionalism and promote ethics in its public administration by:

- Creating managerial structures and mechanisms;
- Reforming civil service codes to introduce principles of neutrality, transparency, flexibility and stressing ethics and integrity;

- Implementing a system of recruitment, career development and remuneration based on merit;
- Improving and modernizing methodologies and programmes for training civil servants.

The Chairperson of the Conference sets up jointly with the Conference participants, a working group with the backing of CAFRAD and in close collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to perform the following tasks:

- To elaborate a *Charter for the Public Service in Africa* to affirm the values of the public service profession, restate its goals and missions in the light of the changing conditions and needs of the countries in the region, and outline the basic conditions for enhancing its role, professionalism, ethics and image, including the elaboration of Code of conduct for African public servants.
- To develop strategies and methodologies which can assist the Governments of the African region to achieve such objectives and to meet these basic conditions.

CAFRAD undertakes the following actions:

- To carry out periodic studies on public policies and programmes and to strengthen the capacity of public organizations;
- To organize a Conference of African Directors of Public Service in order to exchange ideas and views on Professionalism and Ethics in African Public Service;
- To prepare a comprehensive report for the next Conference to be presented at the 5th anniversary of resolution 50/225 of the United Nations General Assembly in 2001;
- To organize regular sub-regional meetings to examine the issues of human resources management, including recruitment, in the public service;
- To support in the update and strengthening of the training programmes of schools and institutes of public administration in the context of African public administration needs regarding in particular ethics and professionalism, and to make proposals for appropriate reforms;
- To promote and sustain, in collaboration with other regional and international organizations, and with the help of web sites, press releases and other means a virtual community and network of public administration practitioners and scholars for the debate and exploration of relevant issues; and

Within the framework on ongoing United Nations initiatives for financing development, special

attention should be given to mobilizing the necessary financial resources to strengthen African public administration. In this respect, the Conference follows with interest the steps being taken for the holding of the International Conference planned on this theme.

UN/DESA undertake consultation and build support for the proclamation of a *United Nations Day for Public Service and Development*, to be observed annually;

Call on international financial institutions and other donor partners to allocate in their development assistance policy additional resources in order to facilitate the reforms of the public administration to meet these new challenges.

Request:

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide the necessary expertise and resources to Governments, upon their request, in order to improve professionalism, to strengthen integrity and to combat corruption,
- The Secretary-General of the United Nations to facilitate the exchange of experiences between regions on issues linked to the themes of this Conference, in particular within the framework of the Meeting of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance,
- The Secretary-General of the United Nations to ensure that professionalism and ethics be considered as priority themes in the activities related to public administration within the United Nations system;
- The Chairperson of this Conference to undertake the task of raising the awareness of the international community to the importance of the themes discussed in this Conference, and to report at the next Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service on steps taken for the implementation of this Declaration.

Rabat, 15 December 1998