



Strengthening Public Sector Human Resource Management Capacities in Africa

Capacity Building Workshop on “Promoting Professionalism in the Public Service: Strengthening the Role of Human Resource Managers in the Public Sector for the effective implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration”

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
14-18 March 2011

Aide-Memoire

**“Promoting Professionalism in the Public Service:
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for the implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles
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1. Background and Rationale

A professional and motivated public service is critical for effective, efficient, responsive, transparent, accountable and ethical governance of any country. It is essential in not only for maintaining the rule of law but especially in the formulation and implementation of socio-economic policies, production and equitable distribution of public goods and services as well as for responsible and frugal management of public resources including finances. Like any other resources that go into the development process of a country, a professional motivated public service can only be developed under careful management of human resource managers who are professionally competent to perform the tasks involved in managing the human resource of the public service. Therefore, neglecting issues related to the undeveloped professional status of human resource managers in the public sector in Africa and relegating the human resource managers to non core and non strategic functions when they are supposed to be the top advisers and leaders of public service reform and leadership capacity development programs was a huge mistake and has been partly responsible for continued inadequate capacities in the public service.

Cognizant of the effectiveness of the sharing of experiences and best practices among developing countries when it comes to finding a viable solution to common problems, UNDESA, in collaboration with a group of African senior human resource managers, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service, the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), the African Management Development Institutes Network (AMDIN), and other partners, initiated the establishment of the Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers' Network (APS-HRMnet), which was launched on 27 February 2009 in Arusha, Tanzania, during the UNDESA sponsored Workshop on Capacity Building for Human Resource Development Policy and Strategy in the Public Service in Africa. At its launch, APS-HRMnet elected its Executive Council and an Interim Executive Secretary was appointed. APS-HRMnet immediately started negotiations with various partners especially UNDESA for support to strengthen the human resource management function in the public service in Africa through programs of capacity development.

Recognizing that a professional association of such a kind in the public sector is new to Africa and its survival depends on the support of its development partners, UNDESA formulated a development account project which provided seed money to strengthen APS-HRMnet for the next four years. Among other things, the project provides funding for the organization of two capacity building workshops, two expert group meetings, the designing and populating a website of APS-HRMnet, the designing of on-line training workshops on human resource management and providing study tours to human resource managers from the Least Developed Countries of Africa.

Consequently, UNDESA obtained funding from the General Assembly of the United Nations through its “Development Account Project” to strengthen the newly established network which enabled it to organize the first capacity building workshop on “Strengthening Human Resource Capacities for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and Africa’s Development” in Cotonou, Republic of Benin from 12 to 16 April 2010. This workshop was organized in collaboration with the Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers Network (APS-HRMnet), the UNDP office in Cotonou, and the Ministry of Administrative and Institutional Reform of Benin (MRAI). The workshop was attended by over 200 participants from 42 African countries.

African countries need more than ever capable human resources in the public sector to design and implement development plans including intergovernmental commitments that the country has entered into, such as the African Public Service Charter. Despite the adoption of the provisions of the Charter by consensus, it is not evident whether the charter is indeed implemented in many African countries. A recent research by the Public Administration Capacity Branch of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management shows that there are still a substantial number of countries in African that do not have codes of conduct of public service in place.

The proposed workshop on **“Promoting Professionalism in the Public Service: Strengthening the Role of Human Resource Managers in the Public Sector for the implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration”** is the second major training workshop to be implemented under the development account project of UNDESA. The African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration was originally adopted by consensus at the third Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service held in Windhoek, Namibia, on 5 and 6 February 2001. The Charter includes the fundamental principles of the public service which African administration should observe in its relations with both its users and employees. It also includes a code of conduct that the civil servants should respect. Since its adoption in 2001, the Charter has been revised and recently adopted in January 2011 by the African Union.

The rationale behind the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration is to build trust in government by establishing predictable and consistent service delivery standards and conduct of public officials that will ensure that citizens are treated fairly, equitably and without bias wherever they access government services. If well implemented and followed to its letter, the Charter holds potential for promoting and ensuring professional and ethical behavior, transparency, accountability, and integrity in the public service. It is a strong vehicle for promoting professionalism in the Public Service in Africa. However, it is realized now that without the direct engagement of the the human resource managers in the public service in the application and enforcement of the Charter, it is likely to remain just a framework. This is why the capacity building workshop for public sector human resource managers in the public service in Africa which is planned to be held in Addis Ababa in March 2011 is focused on promoting professionalism through strengthening the role of human resource managers in the implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration. As Africa’s Public Service strategize on how to build professionalism, the human resource managers in any public sector institution need to be taken as a strategic partner, adviser, and even coach in this endeavor. But for this to be effective, the human resource managers must be equipped with knowledge, skills, networks, attitude, and predisposition that enable them to play this role.

2. Main Objectives of the Workshop

The main objectives of the workshop are (a) to provide a platform for Ministers responsible for Public Service, human resource managers in the public service in Africa, and experts in human resource management, to discuss how professionalism can be promoted and sustained in the public service on the continent; (b) to bring to the attention of human resource managers the challenges and obstacles in the implementation of the Charter faced by countries that have already adopted the Charter and/or have some kind of a national Public Service Charter either based on the original document that was adopted in Namibia or the revised version by the African Union; and (c) discuss strategies for the domestication of the key provisions of the African Charter in the codes, standards and regulations at the national level in order to promote professionalism in the public service.

3. Specific objectives

- a) To discuss the role of human resource managers in the promotion of professionalism in the public service and in implementing the public service charter at national level.
- b) To discuss how to maintain linkages, collaboration, partnerships, and networking among human resource managers in ministries responsible for public service, other ministries and public sector institutions, their counterparts in Public Service Commissions and other appointing authorities in the public sector, management development institutes, and development partners working on capacity development in the public service in Africa aimed at information sharing, peer learning and capacity enhancement for human resource managers in the public service in Africa.
- c) To identify the various challenges related to the promoting and sustaining professionalism in the Public service in Africa.
- d) To identify and discuss the challenges that must be overcome to get the charter successfully implemented.
- e) To propose strategies through which professionalism can be promoted and sustained and the charter for public service implemented as part of the strategies for professionalism in the public service in Africa
- f) To identify all stakeholders and their roles in the implementation of the charter.

4. Targeted Group

The Workshop is designed for human resource managers in the public sector in Africa; organizations in Africa with focus on Ministries especially those responsible for public service; Public Service Commissions and other appointing authorities in the public sector; and representatives of Management Development Institutes. Focal points of the APS-HRMnet in Africa, members of the APS-HRMnet Executive Council and Advisory Committee will be invited to attend and participate in organizing and facilitating the workshop. Ministers responsible for public service especially those who are on the Committee of the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service will be invited to

participate in order to cultivate political commitment to the development of professional competences for effective management and development of human resources in the public sector in Africa. The participation of the Ministers will also create an environment that is conducive to discuss HRM policy and strategy issues that require the attention of the political leadership in Africa.

African institutions such AAPAM, AMDIN, and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), that are key players in human resource development in the public service in Africa, will be requested to lend hand in facilitating the workshop.

Development partners with interest in supporting capacity building for human resource development, professionalism and accountability in the public sector in Africa will also be invited to attend. International organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) will join UNDESA and UNECA to support and facilitate the workshop.

5. Thematic Content of the Workshop

The workshop will be conducted around the following thematic areas:

- (i) Promoting and strengthening professionalism in the Public Service in Africa: challenges and strategies of cultivating and strengthening professionalism in the Public service in Africa

“Public service professionalism can be understood to refer to the “overall value that encompasses all other values that guide the public service. They include loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness, impartiality, and other values that may be specific to the public services of individual countries. Public service professionalism embraces the notion that those people who join the public service need to be inculcated with shared values and trained in basic skills to professionally carry out their official duties. Complementary to this process is a need to set up management structures to ensure that public service ethos and competence is achieved”¹. The discussion of this theme will be flagged off by a short presentation setting an understanding of professionalism from the basic meaning of the term, placing it in the context of the public service in general and more specifically putting it in the context of Africa. What is professionalism pure and simple? What is professionalism in the public service? How does it look like to act with professionalism in the African context? Is professionalism universal or context specific? In the Africa context what are the challenges that need to be addressed in order to promote professionalism in the public service? What would be the elements of a strategy that an African Public Service should design and implement to promote and strengthen professionalism in the Public Service? There will be a need to bring in an international (universal) perspective on this. Is professionalism in the Public Service Universal or context specific? What do countries from outside Africa do to promote and strengthen professionalism in their public service? Are there some lessons that Africa can learn from them in its quest for professionalism in the Public Service?

¹ UNDESA: Professionalism and Ethics in the Public Service: Issues and Practices in Selected Regions: (ST/ESA/PAD/SER.ER/ 5, New York 2000).

(ii) Implementing the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration: Challenges and strategies:

A summary of the provisions of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration needs to be provided to the participants. A discussion of the extent to which the implementation of the charter could contribute to promoting and strengthening professionalism in the Public Service in Africa should follow. It has been nearly a decade since the charter was adopted by the Pan African Conference of Ministers responsible for public service in Africa in Windhoek Namibia in 2001. To date many countries have not adopted it. Among those that adopted it, many have not implemented it. It has been reviewed and revised and adopted by the Africa Union to give it a more Africa wide legal status. What are the challenges that countries face in adopting and implementing the charter? What strategic actions should countries take to facilitate the implementation of the Charter at national level?

(iii) Public Sector human resource managers promoting professionalism and implementing the public service charter at national level: Roles, facilitating and inhibiting factors and strategic actions

What should be the roles of human resource managers in the public service in promoting professionalism and in implementing the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration? What could be considered as factors that facilitate the effective execution of this role? What could be considered as the factors that inhibit the effective execution of the role? The workshop will engage in proposing some elements of strategic actions that could be taken to ensure that human resource managers in the Public sector play their roles effectively in implementing the charter for public service and in promoting and strengthening professionalism in the public service in Africa?

(iv) Linkages, collaboration, partnerships and networking, to promote professionalism and the implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration.

It is probably too much to expect human resource managers to shoulder the responsibility of promoting professionalism and implementing the Charter by themselves. There are many actors that need to be engaged in the process. Top political leadership in Ministries, Senior Public service leaders, human resource managers in all ministries, government agencies and other public sector institutions, Management Development Institutes, Tertiary institutions and Universities, Public Service Commissions and other appointing authorities, Donors and development partners, Civil society institutions and indeed the public at large have a role to play in promoting professionalism. What are the roles of each of these? What are the linkages, collaboration, partnerships and networks that need to be established and maintained to ensure that each of the actors effectively plays their roles in tandem with the other plays to leverage synergy and increase opportunities for effectiveness? What are some of the elements of the strategic actions that need to be undertaken in order to bring all the relevant actors in a collaborative network to sustain efforts at developing professionalism in the public service and strengthening the role of human resource managers in the public sector in Africa to implement the Public Service charter.

6. Expected Outcome

The workshop will contribute to the development of the capacity of the participants in terms of increasing knowledge, skills enhancement, attitude change, and strengthening networking and collaboration for promoting professionalism and implementing the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration. Their appreciation of challenges facing Africa's public services as they relate to the implementation of the Public Service Charter will be explored and strategies for addressing them proposed. The workshop will also create linkages between human resource managers and providers of management training services as well as political leaders (Ministers responsible for public service) and development partners. These linkages are necessary for harmonizing the expectations of the government, the public servants, and development partners in terms of the role of human resource managers in the public sector in designing and implementation of the Charter. In addition, human resource managers will have an opportunity to network and share lessons learnt for replication in their own countries; and strategies for implementing the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration at national level will be proposed.

Finally, conducting this workshop in close partnership with APS-HRMnet will greatly contribute to enhancing its institutional capacity and elevating its image and stature as a body that can support professionalization of human resource management in the public sector in Africa. The participation of the Ministers responsible for Public Service especially those that are Members of the Bureau of the Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in Africa will further cultivate and strengthen the political commitment to the promotion of professionalism and implementation of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration. Finally, the recommendations made by the workshop will be instrumental in the plan of the APS-HRMnet Executive Council to support the Ministers of Public Service to implement the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration.

7. Organizers, facilitators and Resource Persons

The Workshop will be organized by the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of UNDESA in collaboration with the Governance and Public Administration Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Ministry of Civil Service of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and the Executive Council of the Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers' Network (APS-HRMnet). Dr. John-Mary Kauzya Chief of the Public Administration Capacity Branch of DPADM/DESA will be the main facilitator of the workshop in collaboration with Mr. Said Adejumobi of ECA; Mr. George Yambesi, President of the APS-HRMnet; Ms. Adah Muwanga, Executive Secretary of the APS-HRMnet and the representative of the Ministry of Civil Service of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. Regional Consultants and at least one International one will be hired to prepare and deliver the key substantive papers while the rest of the substantive presentations, especially case studies will be prepared by resource persons drawn from human resource managers in African countries to enrich the sharing of experiences and peer-to-peer learning. Ministers responsible for Public Service who will participate will hold a Ministerial discussion panel to discuss how to effectively implement the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration and strengthen professionalism in the Public Service in Africa and how to secure and sustain political and top leadership commitment to this cause. Other resource persons will be drawn

from relevant institutions notably: the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM), the African Management Development Institutes Network (AMDIN), and the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), as well as the Association of Public Service Commissions and other appointing authorities.

8. Process

The workshop will be conducted through short substantive presentations in plenary, discussions in plenary, a Ministerial Discussion Panel, small working group discussions, small planning sessions and report back sessions in plenary. The Executive Council of the APS-HRMnet will meet, take the recommendations emerging from the workshop and plan for its future activities in supporting Ministers of Public service to implement the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and the Administration and in promoting and strengthening professionalism in the Public Service.

9 Languages:

The Workshop will be conducted in French and English

10. Venue and dates:

The workshop will be held at the United Nations Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14 to 18 March 2011.

11. Contact Address:

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