The African Conference of Ministers of Public Service and Administration:

Advancing the African Agenda for Capable States
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Introduction

In 1994, African ministers of public and civil service from all regions in Africa came together to establish the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service. With this initiative, the ministers took the unique step of establishing an African inter-state platform for transnational policy development in the areas of governance, public administration, civil service and service delivery. In the decade and a half that followed, the African ministers’ forum mushroomed into a forum for creating norms, mapping out common African interests, establishing common rules, and creating common institutions in the areas of governance and public administration. As a policy learning network, the Conference crafted principles, collected data, exchanged information, identified critical areas for intervention, created frameworks for cooperation, and developed programmes of action in the areas of governance and public administration. From 2003 onwards, the African Conference became a platform convened under the auspices of the African Union.

This document serves as a documentary on the work and achievements of the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service. It focuses on the role of the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service, established in 1994, and how this forum has helped to shape the emerging African architecture of development, governance, and peace and security. The document aims to assist African governments, participating states, individuals and civil society actors to track and understand the role of this inter-African agency; and it provides readers as well as participants with practical information on the objectives and functions of the forum.

The documentary provides suggestions and guidelines for participants and observers to:

• familiarise themselves with the work of the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service, and political and socio-political developments on the continent;
• publicise the works of the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service, the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development
(NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and other intra-
state bodies and programmes; and

- promote and encourage deliberative policy engagement in the work of the
  Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service.

This documentary:

- covers the time frame 1994 to 2008;
- explains the original mandate of the programme;
- unpacks the strategies adopted by the Conference since 1994;
- highlights programmes of action of the Ministers’ Conference;
- explain the role and functions of key continental institutions; and
- places a focus on the gender relations of power.

In terms of the content and outline of the documentary, the following structure
has been opted for:

- Letter by Commissioner Joiner;
- Letter by the Chair, Minister Fraser-Moleketi;
- Introduction;
- The African Ministers Conference: A Short History;
- Rationale: The Need for an African Ministers’ Conference;
- The Working Methods of the Conference;
- The Apex Priority Areas of the Conference.

The documentary reflects the following apex priority areas:

- The Africa Public Service Charter;
- Public Sector Anti-Corruption;
- Public Service Innovation Awards;
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development;
- Regional Economic Communities;
- Public Sector Effectiveness;
- Africa Public Service Day;
- Information Communication Technology; and
- Human Resource Development.
Background

The African Ministers’ Conference of Public/Civil Service should be located within the framework of the African Agenda, which developed post-apartheid in 1994, and after the formal cessation of the Cold War in the late 1980s. Since that period, Africa has embarked on a process of introducing a new governance, security and development landscape. During the Cold War and colonial eras, African states were concerned with the liberation of Africa from the brutality of colonial, apartheid and white-minority oppression. With the fall of apartheid and white-minority oppression, the continent had achieved its objective of political emancipation. The emphasis then shifted to issues of socio-economic emancipation. Today, Africa is preoccupied with issues of development, integration, peace and security, shared economic growth, democritisation and governance.

Many African actors – state and non-state – have emerged to play key roles in helping to shape this new post-Cold War, post-apartheid African architecture. In its 2005, “Progress Towards Good Governance in Africa”, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) argues that,

*in the area of democratic transitions, many African states have made significant strides evolving from authoritarian or military regimes to more democratic arrangements. We see a new social pact emerging, where state institutions and processes are gradually being reconstructed to promote the values of good governance. Indeed, elections have become the only basis for choosing and changing leadership.* (iv)

The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service is one actor that has emerged to play a role in helping to create the necessary conditions for the advancement of Africa’s democratic governance agenda, in which the elements of “good governance”, service delivery and public administration are emphasised. The African Ministers’ Conference demonstrates a remarkable coming together of, and engagement amongst, African countries to develop an integrated approach to strengthen public services and achieving
progress in forging continent-wide public administration reform processes. They have demonstrated the possibilities to help create an African inter-state system.

The African Ministers’ Conference seized the opportunity to engage Africa’s renewed Pan-Africanism, a new Continentalism, by committing to developing policies that will advance public and civil service and administration in Africa. The Conference has become a platform, a policy forum for focused dialogue, debate and information-sharing. It has become a critical agenda-setting platform. The Conference typically combines elements of collective participation and decision-making on the continental agenda on public administration.

The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service was established in 1994. The ministers convened their first conference in Tangier, Morocco on 20 and 21 June 1994 to begin constituting their forum.

The 2nd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, organised with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations was held in Rabat, Morocco, from the 13 to 15 December 1998. The Conference was a landmark event for African public administration as it set the foundation for establishing a Charter for the Public Service in Africa. In keeping with the recommendations of the Conference, a ministerial working group, supported by a secretariat, was established to draft the Charter. The Africa Public Service Charter was adopted at the 3rd Conference held in Windhoek, Namibia, on 5 and 6 February 2001.

The 4th Conference took place on 6 and 7 May 2003 in Stellenbosch, South Africa, where ministers pledged to hold future conferences under the banner of the African Union Commission (AUC). The 5th Conference, convened under the AUC, was held on 14 and 15 of December 2005 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The 5th Pan-African Ministers’ Conference was held in December 2005.
The 6th Pan-African Conference was held in October 2008. The 6th African Ministers’ Conference consolidated the centrality of the theme and niche of capacity building for the African state, as well as developing and enhancing the collective capability of the African Ministers of Public/Civil Service to realise the goal of civil service and African state capacity building capabilities.

The Conference resolved to establish ministerial bureaus to serve as backstop for the bi-annual meeting of the African Conference of Ministers. During the 5th Pan Ministers’ Conference, a Ministerial Bureau was elected to support the Chairperson and provide overall leadership and oversight of the Pan-African Ministers’ Programme and projects. Countries that champion various thematic areas of the Ministers’ Programme are: Nigeria – Anti-Corruption; Algeria – African Public Service Charter; Mauritius – African Public Sector Innovation Awards; and Burundi – Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.

The 1st Ministerial Bureau Meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in April 2006 where a joint work programme was adopted. The 2nd Ministerial Bureau Meeting was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December 2006. This meeting provided clarity about the roles and responsibilities for champions. Technical partners were invited to the Bureau meeting to discuss possible partnerships in advancing the Abuja Plan of Action. The 3rd Ministerial Bureau took place in March 2007, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and considered progress reports against the plan of action.

The 4th Meeting of the Ministerial Bureau of the 5th Pan-African Conference was held in Windhoek, Namibia, on 24 and 25 October 2007. The meeting reviewed progress made in the collective work of the ministers of public service, under the auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC). In addition to a detailed reflection on the progress made in a number of areas, the meeting solidified the collective actions that will be taken to strengthen the state of governance and public administration on the African continent.
The 5th Ministerial Bureau Meeting took place in Bujumbura, Burundi, in April 2008. The Bureau Meeting, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union Commission, made final preparations for and announced that the 6th African Ministers’ Conference will be held in July 2008 in Gauteng, South Africa.

Throughout the fourteen years of the African Ministers’ Conference, the ministers have created forums and debating chambers to influence the continent’s emerging policy agendas. In terms of established practice, the Conference is held bi-annually.

As a modest contribution to help create some of these policy spaces, the ministers of public service and administration set up their own forum in 1994. Prior to 1994, there was very little public participation in shaping and influencing the processes and outcomes of policy processes by ministers of public service. This has since changed as ministers are now more involved in shaping the discourse, policy and implementation at the regional and continental levels. Before, continental policy decisions were left mainly to participating heads of states and governments.

Over the past decade and a half, the momentum to sustain collective efforts and support national public administration reform efforts culminated in the establishment of the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service. Since its inception, the Ministerial Conference has demonstrated a commitment to move beyond the passive exchange of information towards establishing practices, codes and standards for public administration in Africa. The ministers are driven by the recognition that the establishment of basic frameworks for public administration is central to the overall effectiveness of the state in realising sustainable development.

Pan-African Ministers’ Conferences

1. The First Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service was held in Tangier, Morocco, between the 20 and 21 June 1994.

2. The Second conference was held in Rabat, Morocco, between the 13 and 15 December 1998.
3. The Third conference was held in Windhoek, Namibia, between the 5 and 6 February 2001.

4. The Fourth conference, held under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and hosted by the Government of the Republic of South Africa, was held in Stellenbosch, between the 4 and 7 May 2003. The Stellenbosch Declaration was adopted during the 4th Pan Ministers’ Conference.

5. The Fifth Pan African Ministers’ Conference was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14 to 15 December 2005, under the auspices of the African Union.

The NEPAD Secretariat, which has been in operation since the launch of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in October 2001, had supported the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service, and welcomed the fact that the ministers set out to help meet the development mandates outlined by African leaders by linking their work to the broader continental development agenda. The African Union (AU), Africa’s most important pan-integration body, pledged to work with the ministers’ forum and to support initiatives like the Charter for Public Service in Africa of 2001, which is being implemented in many countries and monitored by various regional economic forums.

The Ministers’ Conference aims to further establish the centrality of governance and public administration capacity for development and to enhance the collective capability of African Ministers of Public Service. Specifically, this document suggests the critical priorities for African state capacity development.

In locating the African Ministers’ Conference within the context of the African Agenda, the forum has subscribed to Amartya Sen’s notion that development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over-activity of repressive states. Development, said the forum, is not achieved simply through the articulation of international policy such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), global development support partnerships or strategic state intervention through comprehensive public service reform. It also requires the systematic and active engagement of a range of actors in global, continental
and national spaces. Ensuring development that leads to freedom requires the building and resourcing of social and political spaces, which significantly engage marginalised social groups in the policy development and implementation process. Access and even voice of the public is insufficient to ensure that those historically excluded are heard and integrated into government policies and programmes in meaningful ways, which address deeply entrenched poverty and marginalisation.

Many of the governance ideas of the African Ministers' Conference were incorporated in the Report on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which was adopted by the AU Assembly in 2007. The Charter is now at the point where AU member state governments have to ratify and implement the content of the Charter and to ensure that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process takes the elements and contents of the Charter on board. We will consider what role the Pan-African Ministers' Conference could play in realising this goal.

The Political Affairs Department of the AU Commission stated that areas related to the African Union Anti-Corruption Convention, the implementation of the Charter for Public Service in Africa, and the reconstruction and/or establishment of governance and state capability within the context of post-conflict reconstruction should be energetically implemented, and that the African Ministers' Conference has an important role to play in advancing this programme. The Department of Political Affairs of the AU Commission committed to support the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration, and will do it in tandem with the promotion of the African Union's Governance and Public Administration Agenda.
The Special Case for Building Capable States

If we accept that the African crisis is essentially a crisis of the state, then the emphasis by the African ministers on African state-building is apposite. As such, the African ministers have long identified capacity building and state-building in Africa as a key priority, and set out to develop a broad strategic framework for identifying long-term capacity building needs. For fourteen years now, the need for civil service capacity building and state-building in Africa has been the overall agenda of the African Ministers’ Conference. Looking back, there is no doubt that the ministers have succeeded in putting onto the continental agenda the critical questions of African civil service and state-building, and have also highlighted what a critical priority this is in the context of the African Agenda.

The central question that African Ministers of Public Service/Administration set to address is this: How can African ministers of public/civil service create viable public administration institutions within a post-conflict environment given the challenges faced by the African state?

In its 2005 report, “Striving for Good Governance in Africa”, the ECA provided us with a rationale for the democratic, capable state in Africa. The ECA stated that, “a core element of good governance is a capable democratic state – a state embedded in the public will, relying on legitimacy though the democratic process, with strong institutions promoting the public interest” (ECA, 2005: 26). Says the ECA: “A key task for all African governments and societies is to build the capacity and accountability of state institutions” (ECA, 2005: 26). This involves ten key areas deserving the full attention of African policymakers, viz:

- strengthening parliaments;
- deepening legal and judicial reforms to protect property rights and ensure the independence of courts;
- improving public sector management;
• improving the delivery of public services;
• removing bottlenecks to private enterprise;
• tapping the potential of information and communication technologies to support government;
• fostering responsible media;
• using traditional modes of governance to promote development and enforce contracts;
• attacking AIDS to end its pernicious effects on governance – indeed on all governance; and
• getting partners to live up to their commitments.

Framework for The Long-Term Strategy:

(Source: African Ministers’ Conference, Long-Term Strategy, August 2008.)

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) similarly argued that “it is now understood that institutional and human capacities, governance and development are interdependent and in a relationship of reciprocal cause and effect” (ECOSOC, 2008: 1). ECOSOC developed a “Strengthening governance and public administration and capacities for development
strategy”, and argued that, “in times of radical transformation and crises, new and renewed forms of governance and public administration capacities are needed to achieve sustainable, people-centred, pro-poor governance and development” (ECOSOC, 2008: 1).

At a time when the state was under pressure from power international actors to make way for the market, the ministers advanced the idea that the African state should be brought back in and reinvented and reinvigorated. As early as 1994, ministers of public/civil service opted to focus on the niche of developing a capacity building strategy for state-building. They focused on a strategy that highlights a number of key developmental aspects, including: public service reconstruction, building state capacity, the macro-organisation of the state, systems to deliver services and anti-corruption measures. The African ministers challenged notions of the minimalist state, and instead made the case for strong and capable states. The ministers campaigned for capable African states that do not play overbearing and dictatorial roles in African societies. Nor are such states Leviathan or patriarchal states. Instead, the capable African state in fact serves the common good and is a positive force in African societies, and African ministers correctly identified the building of the state as the niche – the strategic hook – that they could focus on to help consolidate the African Agenda.

The African Agenda: The Rationale for the African Ministers’ Conference

It is proper to place the analysis within the framework of the African Agenda – which outlines the continent’s set of post-Cold War, post-apartheid development, political, and socio-economic priorities (CCR, 2005). As such, the documentary will consider the work of key institutions and programmes such as the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The African continent has, since independence from colonial rule, consistently pursued policies of regional cooperation and integration as a means of
promoting socio-economic development, and protecting the continent from neo-colonialism and reducing its dependence from the countries of the North. However, as African states finally became independent, they jealously guarded their sovereignty and were reluctant to devolve any power to a supra-natural governing body. However, African states did recognise the need to establish an organisation that would act as a vehicle for African unity. This quest for African unity was partially accomplished when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established in 1963.

After the establishment of the OAU, African leaders viewed African unity as being central to the total liberation of the African people, both economically and politically. It was argued that the road to genuine economic advancement and the end of the colonialist and neo-colonialist domination lies in the united act of a united Africa. The OAU did not completely ignore issues of regional cooperation. Specialised commissions on economic and social development, science, culture, education and military, as well as conciliation and arbitration, were created to give momentum to regional cooperation. The OAU adopted the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) in 1980 to revive regional cooperation initiatives. It set a twenty-year developmental agenda for the continent with a focus on seven priority areas, viz:

- rural economy and agricultural matters;
- monetary and financial affairs;
- trade, customs and immigration matters;
- industry, science and technology, energy, natural resources and environment;
- transport, communications and tourism;
- health, labour and social affairs; and
- education, culture and human resources.

The Lagos Plan of Action set itself the task of establishing an African Economic Community (AEC). In this regard, the adoption of the Abuja Treaty by the OAU in 1991 was an important step towards the integration of the continent. The Treaty was geared towards adding momentum to the LPA
creating an AEC by 2025 “in order to foster the economic, social and cultural integration of the African continent”. According to this proposal, existing Regional Economic Communities, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the common market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, the East African Community, the Economic Community of Western African States; and the Arab Maghreb Union, could act as building blocks of the AEC (AU Audit, December 2007). The proposed organs of the AEC included some to the institutions that were to be incorporated into the AU, i.e. the Pan-African Parliament, the Economic and Social Council, the Specialised Technical Committee as well as at the Court of Justice.

Africa’s efforts towards regional integration gained momentum at the end of the Cold War in 1989 as this created space for the continent to finalise the anti-colonial struggle and to entrench democracy within Africa. The prevailing global environment of globalisation has also encouraged greater interdependence of states and regionalism within the continent.

The liberation of Namibia in 1990 and South Africa in 1994 brought the era of colonialism in the continent to an end, with the exception of the Western Sahara (Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic), which is still colonised by Morocco. These new developments and the expansion of globalisation meant that the structures of the OAU were no longer effective in confronting the new challenges of social political and economic realities in Africa and the world.

The new context, marked by globalisation, the partial end of colonialism in Africa and the end of the Cold War, called for greater African unity, solidarity and cohesion, and thus prompted the formation of the African Union in 2002.

The formation of the AU ushered a new era of optimism, which gave Africans confidence to boldly assert the 21st Century as “the African Century” (Audit of the AU, December 2007). An effectively functioning AU would be able to address wars and conflicts, promote democratisation and political stability, and achieve the continent’s socio-economic development goals. In its
founding document, the Constitutive Act, the AU articulates some of its objectives as follows (AU Audit, December 2007):

- achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and at the people of Africa;
- defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of its member states;
- accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- encourage international cooperation taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the declaration of human rights;
- promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- coordinate and harmonise the policies between the existing and future Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology.

The goals as articulated by the AU are in line with those of the African ministers of public service and administration. The goals of the African Ministers’ Conference are also in line with those of the continent’s socio-economic development plan, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which was designed to address socio-economic challenges facing the African continent, and to advance a people-centred development (OAU, NEPAD, October 2001). NEPAD is based on democratic values and principles, which commits African governments to good governance, accountability and transparency. Each of Africa’s sub regions is expected to identify projects in the eight priority sectors of the NEPAD, namely good governance, infrastructure, education, health, agriculture, information and
technology, energy, and market access, with the aim of encouraging closer cooperation and integration amongst African countries.

Africa has benefitted last from globalisation and has suffered most particularly in terms of mounting poverty, the spread of devastating diseases such as HIV and AIDS and other infectious diseases, the loss of human resources through the brain drain, and the negative impact of the weight of the external debt (AU Mission and Vision, 2004). All these contribute to the perpetuation of political conflicts which in turn hinder economic and social progress in the continent. Africa’s underdevelopment has been further aggravated by the fact that developing countries generally, and Africa specifically, have to contend with developed countries’ agricultural subsidies, lack of market access and other unfair trade practices.

As African states embarks on greater cooperation and integration, the African Ministers’ Conference is committed to assist the political and governance goals of the AU’s Constitutive Act. The challenge for Africa is to develop a strategy that will effectively position the continent in a way that will ensure that the global agenda is made relevant to its developmental needs. (See AU Mission and Vision, 2004.) National, continental and global governance challenges are faced in this broad African Agenda. The African ministers have articulated strategies which stress regional cooperation and partnership of the countries of Africa in order to benefit from processes of state-led developmental integration in the continent.

A central pillar of the African Agenda is to encourage collective determination of the countries of the global South in order to strengthen their self-reliance and defend their sovereignty in bodies such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the group of 77 developing countries. This is informed by the idea that changes in the international system carry far-reaching consequences for Africa and countries of the South.

The OAU’s Sirte Declaration of 1999 was a crucial product of the collective reflections that were undertaken on the imperatives of the unification of Africa
in a rapidly changing global context. The Declaration set the stage for the Constitutive Act of 2000 as Africa sought to come up with a common framework within which to realise its shared destiny. African reached consensus to replace the OAU with the AU in 2002. With the new organisation came important modifications in the principles underpinning the quest for continental political unification and economic integration. Among the principles embodied was the confirmation of the rejection of unconstitutional changes of government. It also endorsed the new principle of “non-indifference” in the conduct of inter-state affairs and embraced the doctrine from “non-interference” to “non-indifference” (Mwanasali, 2008). It recognised gross violations of human rights and genocide as pretexts for intervention.

Other principles underpinning the AU include the greater recognition given to the involvement of African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the continental project of unification. This recognition represented the first time in the post-independence history of institution-building for continental unification that such close attention was paid to mechanisms for securing popular participation in line with the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation adopted in Arusha, Tanzania. A commitment was taken to promote greater gender parity and equality in the workings of the Union. This was further concretised in the decision of the Assembly to observe a 50/50 ratio in the election of the commissioners of the AU. The Constitutive Act also provided for a completely revamped set of organs whose combined actions were designed to give the AU a more effective presence and impact than the OAU was ever able to enjoy. Commitments that were taken within the framework of the Abuja Treaty were reaffirmed with a view to deepening regional economic cooperation and integration as building blocks towards the African unification and transformation project.

The birth of the AU, with its political, legal and economic structures and instruments, represents a serious attempt to infuse the project of continental unification with new urgency.
Defining moments which have shaped the African Agenda, include:

- the creation of the OAU in 1963;
- the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos in 1980;
- the signing of the Abuja Treaty in 1991;
- the signing of the Sirte Declaration of 1999 and the adoption of the Constitutive Act of 2000; and

Each of these moments has been characterised by a set of common challenges to which collective responses were both required and attempted.

**The Ministers’ Conference and the African Union Work-Plan**

The African Ministers’ Conference on Public/Civil Service has located its work within the overall context of Africa’s emerging inter-state and governance architecture. Since 2002 in particular, the African Ministers’ Conference has worked with NEPAD and the AU on a “Joint Work Programme”, which was completed on the basis of the mandate derived from the 5th Pan-African Conference of Ministers and the AU Executive Council Decision (EX.CL/Dec.243 (VIII)) on the ministerial submission (Doc.EX.CL/222 (VIII)). This is an implementation programme that is meant to reflect the partnership approach established between the AUC, NEPAD, the Ministerial Bureau and the Office of the Chairperson.

The Joint Work Programme contains all the broad elements of the 5th Conference of Ministers of Public Service (December 2005 to December 2007). The Joint Work Programme is a “Governance and Public
The NEPAD Democracy and Governance Initiative emphasises that “development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance” (NEPAD, 2001). NEPAD commits African states to respect global standards of governance and democracy, with their core elements of political pluralism, with several political parties and open, free and democratic elections (NEPAD, 2002).
A NEPAD Governance and Public Administration initiative was also agreed to with the aim of contributing to the political and administrative framework of African countries, in line with the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and the promotion of the rule of law. This NEPAD initiative also makes a commitment to strengthen political governance and public service effectiveness through building administrative capacity, improving regulatory frameworks and political oversight, promoting participatory decision-making, ensuring accountability in the use of public resources and adopting effective measures to combat corruption.

The NEPAD Governance and Public Administration Initiative set out to:
- link NEPAD objectives and priorities to development and reform trends across the continent;
- align global and continental policy priorities to the role of the African state and its institutions;
- explore mutually supportive roles for NEPAD, the African Union and national reform efforts; and
- examine current trends and efforts of development partners and the inherent challenges and opportunities of collaboration.

The Capacity Building Strategy

Another important area that African ministers should emphasise in their efforts to create viable public administration institutions is the question of capacity building for service delivery. African states continue to face the daunting challenge of delivering services by putting citizens at the centre of public service planning and operations. It is a major departure from the old dispensation through which governments provided services “for” people as opposed to working in partnership “with” people.

Today, African governments face the added challenge that government should transform service delivery mechanisms to meet the needs of citizens. In order to meet these challenges, Africans need transformed public services
which are representative, coherent, transparent, efficient, effective, accountable and responsive to the needs of all citizens. The Pan-African Ministers’ Conference has recognised that the continent’s citizens deserve public services that are people-centred and people-driven, and that are characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and strong codes of ethics.

Ministers have emphasised that African states also need new breeds of civil servants that display a number of key attributes and characteristics. Public servants should be courteous when providing services to the public by listening to their problems, apologising when necessary and serving people with a smile. They should respect all citizens, irrespective of background, gender, colour or creed. The public service needs to develop service standards, provide information, seek service delivery solutions and go beyond the call of duty. This aims at delivering quality services and making citizens look forward to receiving world-class integrated service delivery. This could be achieved by anticipating customer needs through the introduction of regular customer surveys on the type of services citizens would want to receive.

African ministers have sent out a clear message that African states should provide a framework for delivering public services to the many that do not have access to them and address inequalities in the distribution of existing services. Access to information and services empowers citizens, and creates value for money and quality services.

Capacity building for effective service delivery remains a major issue for African states and it requires an integrative, coordinated approach; the African Ministers’ Conference has understandably prioritised this issue. Capacity constraints among African states often stretch the time lag between agenda setting, decision-making, resource mobilisation and implementation. Capacity building strategies thus have to focus on and address these levels, as well as all spheres at local, national, regional and continental levels. Ministers have realised that there is need for a common African strategy on capacity building. Many African countries have capacity development strategies. However, these strategies are deemed to be poorly coordinated and not as highly
valued as they ought to be. The goal of capacity building strategies is to enhance the state’s ability to effectively create an environment for the achievement of stated goals.

Since its establishment as a forum, the African Ministers’ Conference has emphasised the need to prioritise human resource management and utilisation development of skills and strategies and building institutions that are required to achieve capacity development. Emphasis has also been placed on enhancing the strategic skills of civil servants, including the ability to craft clear development and policy agendas, as well as the ability to translate agendas, ideals and strategies into clear programmes and projects. A further skill that is required, and that was on the agenda of the African ministers, is the ability to identify opportunities, and constraints, and the introduction of requisite interventions to address weaknesses and constraints. African civil servants must have the ability to foster strong social partnerships with societal forces and civil society entities. Interface with the public and citizens in the continent should in fact become the core raison d’être of public service provision. In our continent, the overwhelming majority of public services are to be found in education, health, police, and welfare and social development. There is thus the challenge of organising and managing these millions of public servants into cohesive, well-coordinated units and effective government operations throughout the continent.

Over the past five years, the African Ministers’ Conference engaged NEPAD on the need to develop, in partnership, a Capacity Development Framework, a key priority area for the continent and thus for the Pan-African Ministers’ Conference (NEPAD Secretariat, December 2005). Implementation experiences suggest that capacity still remains a major issue and requires an integrative coordinative approach. In this respect, the proposed strategy has to focus on all spheres at the local, national, regional and continental level.

It was further observed that many African states have capacity development strategies. However, these strategies are deemed to be poorly coordinated and not as highly valued as they ought to be. A particular problem is the
retention of existing capacities and in some instances under-utilisation of existing capacities. The goal of the initiative is for capacity development to be the central vehicle towards the state’s ability to effectively create an environment for the achievement of stated goals.

In light of the stated objectives, the initiative would focus on empowering the leadership to ensure accountability and to enable engagement at the sub-regional and continental level. Coupled with this, the initiative would also empower citizens, thereby enhancing accountability. The initiative has eight key drivers. These range from leadership transformation, to communication and building of the capacity of capacity developers.

**The Africa Public Service Charter: A Special Niche**

The issue of public service strengthening is of course pivotal to the work of the Ministers’ Conference; it is *primus inter pares* in the activities of the work of the Ministers’ Conference. The 2005 ECA report argued in relation to public sector strengthening that, “when it comes to strengthening the capacity of public sector performance, only a long-term, carefully thought-out and sustained effort, tailored to each country, can succeed” (ECA, 2005: vi). The ECA report continued to argue that “action must focus on re-evaluating the role, optimal size and organisational structure of the public sector – and on reducing red tape to minimise the burden of administration and reduce opportunities for corruption” (ECA, 2005: vi).

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration similarly identified six priority areas in which member states could build capacity to implement the United Nations Millennium Declaration (ECOSOC, 2008: 3). These six priority areas are:

- the public sector must recruit and retain its fair share of the best talent;
- public sector institutions must become strategic and strong “learning organisations” in a globalised and knowledge-based economy;
• public sector institutions should utilise the power of information and communications technologies (ICTs) in support of innovation and governance;
• governments should align their finance and management systems to ensure the optimal mobilisation and use of resources;
• governments should design and implement effective combination of decentralisation and centralisation policies and programmes in order to promote people-centred development; and
• public sector institutions should support evidence-based international data.

These challenges, as identified by the Economic Commission for Africa, as well as the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration, were boldly taken up by the African ministers in the Africa Public Service Charter (APSC). The 2nd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, organised with the support of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, held in Rabat, Morocco, from 13 to 15 December 1998, was a landmark event for African public administration: it set the foundation for establishing a Charter for the Public Service in Africa.

The following key elements of the Charter are in line with the vision of the capable developmental state in Africa (Long term Strategy, August 2008):
• commitment to citizen-centred public service;
• commitment to efficient and quality service delivery which highlights the participation of citizens, availability, accessibility and quality of services;
• modernisation of the public service including promoting meritocracy versus patronage, and utilisation of technology;
• behaviour and rules of conduct of public servants;
• guarantees and rights of public servants;
• professionalism, ethics and integrity, conflict of interest, declaration of interests;
• human resource management and development; and
• mechanism for implementation.

The Public Service Charter was adopted by 38 African states at the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in 2001. Yet it needs to be understood that the Charter is yet to be adopted by all African states, or by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, as an official and legal instrument of the AU.

The Charter was supported by the Governance and Public Administration Capacity Development programme adopted at the 4th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in 2003, known as the Stellenbosch Declaration.

The Africa Public Service Charter is one of the flagship programmes of the Pan-African Ministers' Conference, developed as a central framework to streamline public service effectiveness across Africa. The Charter has been hailed as being the most comprehensive charter of public service that has emerged at the multilateral level.

Ministers cultivated considerable effort and energy in the development and refinement of the APSC. The significance of the APSC is that it presents a common framework for moving member states together towards public service effectiveness. The Charter's underlying message is that there is a direct correlation between the application of the codes and principles it embodies, and the effectiveness of the country’s public administration.

Algeria is heading up and champions this thematic area of the Africa Public Service Charter, one of the Pan-African ministers’ key priorities. Indeed, the APSC signified the political will and commitment of Africa with regard to good governance, ethics and accountability, and commits Ministers to help ensure transparency when making administrative decisions. The APSC provides common values while still preserving diversity, and through sharing different experiences the APSC can and should evolve into a powerful catalyst for reforming the public service.
In 2005, African ministers decided that the Charter needed to be revised so as to enhance its effectiveness. Algeria was entrusted with chairing the process of revising the Charter. Between 2005 and 2008 considerable effort went into the development and refinement of the Charter.

The APSC has three strategic thrusts that are comprehensive and designed to provide a common platform to define and measure the continents' governance and public administration programme (DPSA presentation to SADC Consultative Conference, 2007). The three strategic thrusts are:

- the Charter defines the key components of a professional and effective public service and its role in building the capable state;
- it introduces common measures and systems to ensure transparency and accountability in the public sector; and
- it establishes a general framework of guiding principles, policies and management mechanisms to be used as a common language in the area of public service in African countries.

The general provisions of the Charter are divided into four parts: the first defines the purpose and scope of application of the text; the second recalls the “fundamental and universal principles of the public service”, namely the principles of legality, neutrality, equality and continuity; the third part sets forth the rules governing relationships between the public service employees and citizens (the end users), which are based on the criteria of the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the public service; and the fourth part deals with the relationship between the public service and public service employees, and addresses the obligations of the administration vis-à-vis career development, remuneration and working conditions. The code of conduct within the Charter is divided into two parts:

- fundamental values of public service employees, and
- rules of conduct of public service employees.
The code defines the fundamental values of professionalism and integrity that should guide public service employees, establishes the rules affirming the primacy of general interests over private interests, and recommends that countries should undertake sensitisation and training programmes in these areas and establish follow-up and monitoring bodies.

Article 29 of the APSC envisages the setting up of an implementation body. It was recalled that a decision was taken during the second Bureau Meeting for South Africa to support a Southern African Development Community (SADC) consultative workshop. The workshop took place in April 2007. The objectives of the workshop were to review and conduct a comparative analysis on implementation of the APSC among SADC member states, and to promote a wide consultative forum among a cross-section of experts enabling specialists to share strategies, mechanisms and processes for domestication and implementation of the APSC within the region. The workshop proposed a plan of action for domestication and implementation of the APSC within SADC and mechanisms for taking the APSC through regional policy organs.

Those countries that have implemented the Charter developed it as a self-standing project rather than a mainstreamed activity implemented to trigger public service effectiveness. In fact, in many instances developing a Charter at the national level or even within a particular sector is often an end in itself with great pride associated with the service charter posters.

African states should consider accepting the Charter as a launching pad for public sector reform and transformation processes. In this respect, African states could learn from their Latin American counterparts, who developed their public service charter as the framework and principles for public service transformation (DPSA presentation to SADC Consultative Meeting).

Identifying the Charter as the starting point also provides a good basis for most of the other ministers’ programme activities. The principles help to ensure non-corrupt practice in the public service, can define the terms for
innovation and serve as the basis for the celebration of public service days at the national level and continental level.

What the above suggests is that the Charter is a guiding document and not necessarily a legal instrument for enforcement. The Ministers’ Conference and the champions of Charter now need to constantly work on strategies of how the Charter is to be implemented. The Charter has been adopted by some countries and there needs to be clarity on the status across other countries. For example, Mozambique is in the process of adopting the African Public Service Charter through its Council of Ministers and is developing a Mozambique-specific version of the Charter. The current process and revisions are directed at providing a base for the possible development of the Charter as a legal document.

It is recognised that most African countries have their own codes and rules relating to public service and that these overlap with the Public Service Charter. It is deemed prudent that the Charter is used as a basis to evaluate the efficacy of the codes established and as such, countries need to ensure alignment between their codes and the Charter.

Other challenges faced in terms of the Charter are that knowledge of, and commitment to, the Charter varies across countries in the continent. The Charter therefore does not always find practical expression in the public administration reform process. To be effective, the Charter needs to be adopted as an instrument of the AU. With its adoption as an instrument of the AU, and its ratification by countries, there will be obligation on the part of those states that have ratified the Charter, and the Charter will enjoy legal sanction.

**The Africa Public Service Day Initiative**

Following the assessment of the special niche area of the Public Service Charter, it is important to give an account of the Africa Public Service Day (APSD) initiative. The APSD is now deep-rooted strategic event of the AU
calendar. Following on from the declaration of the 1st Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service held in Tangier, Morocco, in 1994, the Ministers agreed that 23 June of every year should be celebrated as Africa Public Service Day. The overall aim of Africa Public Service Day is to “recognise the value and virtue of service to the community” (4th Ministerial Bureau Meeting, 25–26 October 2007). The ministers’ declaration was reaffirmed in the Stellenbosch Declaration adopted at the fourth Pan-African Conference of Ministers held at Stellenbosch, South Africa, in 2004. The Stellenbosch meeting recognised the significance of APSD as part of the continental strategy to enhance public administration and governance programmes across the continent. The importance of APSD is that it enables Ministers to:

- reflect on the function of the public service: its mission, objectives, programmes and projects, challenges and successes;
- give recognition to and make known the importance of the civil service, its positive contributions and benefits to public servants, population, civil society, private sector and government;
- motivate and encourage public servants to continue the good work done and to come up with new initiatives and innovations; and
- prepare the public service and administration for a better future by proposing change for the social well-being of the population.

(4th Ministerial Bureau Meeting, 25–26 October 2007.)

Namibia was elected the champion of APSD, and worked actively to develop a work plan for the APSD sub-programme. Dr Libertina Amathila, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and Chairperson of the APSD Ministerial Sub-Committee, played a pivotal and active role in the success of APSD. The role of the continental champion of APSD was to lead and coordinate APSD activities regarding themes and sub-themes, programmes and activities. In June 2007, an APSD website was launched.

Sudan played the role of lead country on this question, and it chaired the Ministerial Sub-committee on APSD. Sudan’s APSD’s celebrations were
characterised by events that highlight the major goals and objectives of the ongoing process of civil service reform. Emphasis has been placed on good governance, effective service delivery to citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and rural poor, and dissemination of information on civil services. Other themes include enhancement of public services so as to adequately respond to citizens’ expectations, and rebuilding and reconstructing of the public sector in a manner that enables it to effectively meet the challenges that face Africa.

To ensure maximum involvement of ordinary citizens, the Sudanese government designed, printed and disseminated colourful educational posters. This campaign has reached nearly all the major towns of the country in addition to other accessible rural settlements.

There is a particular challenge to seek greater coordination and collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

A further challenge is for African governments to constantly forward documentation on the observance of APSD in their respective sub-regions and countries.

**All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards (AAPSIA)**

The All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards (AAPSIA) is another priority area for the Ministers' Conference. AAPSIA is the brainchild of the 4th African Conference of Ministers. AAPSIA seeks to enhance knowledge exchange and development through working closely with other developmental partners and governance and public administration. AAPSIA is at the centre of Africa's broader governance and public administration programme. This programme is aimed at building capacity in the public sector across the continent. The AAPSIA initiative is part of bigger endeavour by the African ministers to cultivate an enabling environment within the public sector for the development and nurturing of innovative ideas and initiatives. The express aim of AAPSIA
is the celebration of innovation in Africa and the awards celebrate brilliance within the continent’s public sector that would otherwise remain unknown and unacknowledged.

Broadly, AAPSIA encompasses the following aspirations:

- to recognise innovation in the service delivery and not only effectiveness; and
- incorporate opportunities for capturing learning, impacting on policy decisions of government and establishing partnerships.

(CPSI concept document, April 2006.)

The first meeting of the Committee of Ministers (28 January 2004, Uganda) approved the orientation and approach for implementing a “Public Sector Innovation Awards Scheme, within the framework of the Ministers’ programme”. In addition to mobilising resources for this activity, it was necessary to ensure that the awards process would be managed effectively and would be a sustainable process. The approved framework provided that the innovation awards should be a feature at all future Public Service Ministerial Conferences. The project was officially launched in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 5th African Conference in December 2005 under the chairpersonship of South African Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. AAPSIA aims to award successful and effective service delivery improvement projects and initiatives that have been achieved through the application of innovative approaches, methodologies and tools. AAPSIA recognises creative initiatives that reflect “out-of-the-box” thinking and individuals who are prepared to think beyond prescribed boundaries.

It is important to recognise that the initiative led by the ministers is directed at promoting and rewarding innovation in the public services across Africa.

Mauritius served as the champion and lead-government for this priority, and, in close consultation with the Chairperson’s Office, established a working committee made up of NEPAD and the Chairpersons’ office to oversee the
implementation of this initiative. The implementation programme has been defined in four stages, namely: design, marketing, adjudication and awards ceremony. The first phase has been completed. The second, which is funded by the Chairperson’s Office, is ongoing and entails travel to different regions to promote and market the initiative. In addition to travel to the African Union regions, there were extensive campaigns raising awareness through the media, and circulation of information through various high commissions and embassies.

The timetable for the implementation of the awards was as follows: marketing by March 2007, adjudication by April 2007 and the award ceremony will coincide with the 6th Pan-African Conference of Ministers. The Chairperson’s Office has provided funds for the marketing phase whilst GTZ has agreed to fund the adjudication phase, whereas part of the EU funding was allocated under the AU/NEPAD work plans. The Pan-African Ministers’ Conference encouraged African states to work proactively to ensure the success of the innovation awards initiative, and to participate in international innovation awards competitions.

Negotiations on the future sustainability of the awards were completed at the level of officials. In view of this it became necessary to formally launch the All Africa Public Service Innovation Awards on the occasion of the 5th Conference of Ministers of Public Service. This event was launched in the anticipation that the first awards within the framework of the ministers’ programme was at the 6th Conference of Ministers of Public Service.

With the launch, the overall responsibility for implementing the awards process resided with the AUC and its programme NEPAD. The NEPAD office managed all elements of communication on the awards and the process to be established for receiving submissions, establishing the relevant evaluation criteria and the actual issuing of the awards.

Four phases for the rollout of the project were agreed upon: a steering committee meeting, conceptualisation, the marking and adjudication phase,
and the actual awards themselves. As part of the marketing process, visits were conducted to a number of AUC regions and the AAPSIA were presented to a range of actors.

Like other initiatives and programmes of the African Ministers’ Conference, the AAPSIA process faced some implementation challenges. Budgetary and time constraints have forced some departure from the original CPSI concept paper, which includes the reduction of categories from five to three, and winners in each category from five to three.

**Towards a Framework for Public Service Effectiveness**

The central question we need to address here is this: how can African ministers of public/civil service create viable public administration institutions given the challenges faced by the African state?

The ECA, in its “Striving for Good Governance” report, correctly asserts that it is “essential to develop an effective channel of accountability between public service providers and their clients” (ECA, 2005: vii). According to the ECA, options for including improved public service effectiveness include “the decentralisation of the provision of public services as well as encouraging greater choice and competition, through various means of incorporating the private sector and non-governmental organisations into the field of public service provision” (ECA, 2005: vii). “Good regulatory oversight”, said the ECA report, “is essential to ensure adequate levels of quality and service provision” (ECA, 2005: vi).

In answering the question on what the public sector can do to address the challenge of making the African public service more effective, African ministers of public/civil service agreed very early on to focus their efforts on the niche of developing a capacity building strategy for state-building. Ministers agreed that strengthening public service effectiveness requires a flexible and phased capacity development strategy. Such a strategy should highlight a number of key aspects, including: public service reconstruction;
building state capacity; the macro-organisation of the state; systems to deliver services; and anti-corruption measures. Notions of the minimalist state should be challenged, and Africans should make the case for strong and capable states. Such a capable African state does not play an overbearing and dictatorial role in African societies. Nor is it a Leviathan or patriarchal state. The capable African state in fact serves the common good and is a positive force in African societies.

The African Public Service Effectiveness strategy is designed as an outcomes and results-based framework, and it emphasises public service values, measurement of service standards, and continues learning and assessment. The framework explores factors that influence performance, notably policy leadership, accountability and technology (Long Term Strategy, July 2008).

The commitment to work as a collective to enhance governance and public administration effectiveness across Africa is reflected in the numerous historical exchange initiatives across the continent. The established initiatives were supported by organisations such as the African Training and Research Centre in Administration and Development (CAFRAD), the Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF) and the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM). Many of the commitments translated into the establishment of learning exchange opportunities (conferences, seminars), training initiatives and the development of research projects and publications.

The African Ministers' Conference determined that countries should be guided by a standard framework and questionnaire for developing their reports on “Principles and Codes of Public Administration Capacity Effectiveness”. Whilst reports will emphasise active national experiences, participating countries may be encouraged to utilise the Charter as a framework for evaluating their practices. To be effective as a strategy for support, national reports would need to be supplemented by evaluative reports at the continental level. Such reports and country reports may be presented to a committee of ministers or experts for advice and peer-support. As the reports and analysis would centre
on public administration capacity effectiveness, attention should be focused on ensuring that the process is not as complex as the established APRM process, and where necessary, should complement or be complemented by work done within the APRM (NEPAD, African Peer Review Mechanism, March 2003).

To ensure that the initiative has overall continental and regional relevance, ministers are of the view that it is necessary to establish a supportive research initiative that builds on national evaluative analysis of the application of codes and principles in public administration. Within this framework comparative data and information may be collated on a sub-regional basis, followed by a complete report at the continental level. Such a strategy needs to be presented at future ministerial conferences and serve as a basis to evaluate progress across the continent in establishing capable and effective public administration systems. Whilst country participation in the process should be voluntary, countries should be encouraged by a clear articulation of the overall benefit of peer-support in the area of public administration.

As countries conduct evaluative analysis of their principles and codes for public sector effectiveness, they would be collating information and case-studies on practices that could hold relevance for other countries. To enhance the prospects for mutual support and learning, such information should be stored in a central database and online network at the continental level. As other multilateral organisations are also involved in the collation of information, further partnerships should be established where appropriate. In particular, information on such practices may be shared with the OECD and partnerships may be forged with UNDESA and other regional and global organisations involved in this area of activity.

There has been recognition that the quest to improve civil service effectiveness is also usually linked to decentralisation efforts, as well as constructing partnerships with civil society.

**Public Sector Anti-Corruption Strategies**
In their attempts to bring into life viable public administration institutions within a post-conflict environment in the continent, African ministers of public/civil service put the question of fighting corruption firmly on the agenda, and agreed that the challenges posed by corruption should not be underestimated; these consequences are often devastating as corruption negatively impacts on development, governance and service delivery processes.

Ministers decided to establish structure which caters for African anti-corruption bodies. Rooting out the scourge of corruption requires comprehensive responses which place emphasis on the systems, processes, mechanisms, codes, and political will to address this huge problem (Anti-corruption Gateway). It is important to recognise that corruption is a structural phenomenon, not just confined to Africa, but is a global reality, plaguing developed and developing countries alike. Corruption is rooted in relationships between individuals and organisations in the developing and developed worlds, and corrupt practices include theft, fraud, bribery, extortion, nepotism, patronage, and laundering of illicit proceeds. Corruption typically destabilises governance and development processes, and impacts profoundly on the poor. The supply side of corruption must be slowed down as much as the demand side.

The African ministers have also made a point of challenging perceptions about corruption which views corruption typically as an African or developing country problem. They have made the point that, internationally, corruption is typically viewed as an African or “Third World”, developing world phenomenon. In the international public and even private domains, the African continent in particular, the developing South in general, is associated with mega and daily petty corruption and corrupt practices. These crude perceptions have been challenged by African ministers of public/civil service, and reminded us that corruption is a major international problem, and not one confined to Africa. Because corruption is an international challenge, it requires international responses. It is thus vital that Africans and international partners
start to realise the importance of addressing corruption through international partnerships and through common approaches.

The problems around perceptions about corruption and its crude association with Africa and the developing have had two implications, and the negative perceptions have now also influenced definitions and conceptualisations of corruption (Fifth Global Forum, 5 April 2007). The first implication is that corruption is seen as a public sector problem, and until recently the private sector has received scant attention. The second implication is that corruption has been seen as a one-sided phenomenon, with the view that the problem is with those who take bribes, notably politicians and public officials. Again, the continent continues to face an uphill battle to change this perception, and to prove and demonstrate that corruption is a two-way process, between givers and takers, between those who take bribes and those who give and pay for the bribes.

Thus, a typical definition of corruption read that corruption signified the abuse and misuse of public power and public resources for private benefit and that corruption involves behaviour on the part of the public sector, whether politicians or civil servants, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves, or those close to them, by the misuse of power and responsibility entrusted to them (Fifth Global Forum, 5 April 2007).

This definition should be broadened as a matter of urgency, to denote the idea of corruption as a contract and a deal between two parties, those who give and those who take in exchange for mutually beneficial favours and gains. So corruption is a practice that takes place in the public sector, the private sector and even the civil society sector. The African Development Bank (ADB) is thus correct when it argues corruption is a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary activity, and involves practices such as theft, fraud, bribery, extortion, nepotism, patronage and laundering of illicit proceeds. Private sector corruption is as serious as public sector corruption, and the costs are
just as great (Concept Paper for the Fifth Global Forum, February 2007). The ADB also points us to the reality of grand corruption, that is corruption stemming from the interface between the private and public sectors, which even results in the capturing of the state.

State capture, according to the ADB, refers to actions of individuals, groups, firms, multinational corporations, and others to influence the formulation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other policies, by offering illicit benefits to politicians and officials (Concept Paper for the Fifth Global Forum, February 2007).

Corruption is behaviour that is contrary to good and acceptable behaviour, and challenges the democratic rules of the game (Banjo, 2004). It deviates from ethical, moral behaviour and violates the rule of law in our societies.

Corrupt practices and behaviour have a number of objectives. It seeks to influence the decision-making process of public officers for private gain. It seeks to lure public officials into breaches of rules and conduct and to legitimise and reward dishonesty. It encourages insider dealings and conflicts of interests. It influences peddling by the use of fraudulent means such as bribery and blackmail by, and of, public and private sector officials.

In terms of the important issue of the cost of corruption, ministers have consistently highlighted this challenge. A major dimension of the context is the costs associated with corruption. There is recognition throughout the continent that corruption poses many challenges for African societies. Corruption has major financial costs, human security and developmental costs, institutional costs and many others.

Former Nigerian president, Olesegun Obasanjo, and the World Bank Institute estimated that corruption costs the African continent in the region of US$148
billion per annum. This is the kind of resources that could go a long way in helping the continent meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Some researchers have estimated that corruption shaves off as much as between 2 to 4% of the per capita GDPs of some countries. While the continent has set for itself the ambitious goals of achieving 7% economic growth rates per annum, and investment of US$ 64 billion per annum, the wastage of US$ 148 billion clearly undermines both investments and economic growth. Corruption reduces the states capacities to raise taxes and support the small- and medium-sized enterprises in African states. Some estimates reckon that corruption causes the continent as much as 50% in tax revenues. The ADB noted that corruption is also a source and cause of permanent capital flight, with estimates that some US$ 700 billion to US$ 800 billion in illicit funds are held by Africans in foreign accounts, and that some 80 to 90% of this will not return to the continent, raising the question of the responsibility of external players in helping to fight corruption in the continent.

Corruption robs African societies of desperately needed resources that should be channelled to development and poverty eradication. It takes resources away from desperately needed developmental priorities such as health care and education. It corrodes the value systems of the societies we seek to build. Corruption has now become a cross-border and trans-national phenomenon, and therefore stretches the capacities of African states, capacities that are needed to fight national challenges. For example, effective combating of corruption requires that African states get involved in harmonisation and coordination of legislation and policy processes, and to establish joint anti-corruption instruments at regional and continental levels. Yet another challenge is to become better at data and intelligence gathering that is vital if we are to successfully combating corruption. It should also be recognised that partnerships between state and with civil society sectors are key if we are to make serious inroads into the problem. Corruption creates waste and inefficiency, and puts pressure on already scarce resources. It makes the costs of development and administration costly.
The past decade saw the African ministers conference for public/civil service playing a pivotal role in articulating a bold “African Agenda” which rests on five key pillars: development and poverty eradication; peace and security; governance and democratisation; accelerated economic growth; and partnerships with the international community. The fight against corruption is a key element of the African initiatives to eradicate poverty and to put African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development, and it specifically forms part of the continent’s efforts to instil “good” and democratic governance.

The past decade saw various anti-corruption initiatives being launched which involved government and states collaborating, but it also witnessed Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union (AU) playing key roles. Further initiatives also witnessed the continent’s development partners and donors, as well as civil society actors playing important roles in the fight against corruption. Many of these initiatives have been explicitly linked to the continent’s broader governance and economic reform programmes and agendas.

A key aspect of Africa’s good governance provisions places a huge stress on the need to combat corruption and establish anti-corruption commissions throughout the continent. In the past the successor to the OAU Convention on Combating Corruption, the AU Convention, encourages all African states to establish independent anti-corruption commissions, and is adamant that such independent bodies should have their own budgets and report annually to the national legislature on the state of corruption in their countries.

The AU Convention on Combating Corruption and Related Offences encourages states to: enact and enforce criminal laws, which deal with corruption; adopt legislative mechanisms and procedures for the public to be able to raise complaints and concerns about corruption, including the protection of witnesses and whistle-blowers. Article 7 of the Convention calls
upon public officials to declare their assets while in the public service, and Article 12 undertakes to allow and encourage full participation of the media and civil society in combating corruption.

The continent has responded with a series of policy and legal instruments to tackle the corruption challenge. The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption provides for an advisory board on corruption in Africa. The Lusaka report makes recommendations regarding the ratification and implementation of the Convention, regarding the capacity and financial and other resources to implement and support implementation, including the capacity of the AUC, and regarding dialogue and coordination at regional, continental and global levels.

At the sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States Protocol on the Fight Against Corruption and the Economic Community of West African States Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol against Corruption came into force in 2005 but has not been activated through the SADC Anti-corruption Committee established through the SADC Regional Anti-corruption Programme. The SADC Regional Anti-corruption Programme calls for simultaneous implementation of the UN, AU and SADC instruments.

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is one of Africa’s most serious governance initiatives. The economic and corporate governance elements of the APRM recognise that good political governance is a prerequisite for good economic and corporate good governance. The objectives of the APRM’s Country Self Assessment Report include “fighting corruption in the political sphere”, “fight corruption and money laundering”, and promoting “adoption of codes of good business ethics in achieving the objectives of the corporation”.

A civil society initiative, the African Human Security Initiative, noted “the fight against corruption needs more than just a good legislative or criminal justice framework. There should also be strong political will on the part of the
government to ensure that no offenders escape the law – regardless of position or status in society”. The Initiative further states that “transparency is imperative in the fight against corruption because it makes it possible for the public to monitor the actions of office bearers in relation to rules and regulations”.

The continent now has a Pan-African Meeting of National Anti-corruption Bodies, and the 1st Pan-African Meeting took place in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 2005. The Lusaka meeting, amongst many other recommendations, calls for annual meetings of Pan-African National Anti-corruption Bodies. The 5th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service has mandated the Chairperson of the 5th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service and the Commissioner of Political Affairs of the AU to use their good offices to promote and support ratification of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. The Africa Partnership Meeting of 3 June 2006, and the Meeting of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Banjul, the Gambia, in July 2006 also emphasised the need for African governments to redouble their efforts to fight corruption.

The Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa describes corruption as “the bane of good economic management” (ECA, 2005: 15). According to the ECA, “tax evasion and corruption in the tax system, rampant in many African countries, reduce the government’s tax base and capacity to deliver basic services – thwarting transparency and good economic management”. The ECA goes on to state that “in only 4 countries did more than 40% of expert respondents consider the tax system to be fairly efficient and well managed” (ECA, 2005: 15).

Nigeria as the leader and champion for this thematic area, presented the progress report to the meeting. Nigeria’s efforts focused on encouraging sub-regional solutions to the corruption threat, such as ECOWAS’ “Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative and Strategy in Africa: The Nigerian Experience and
ECOWAS”, a project carried out in partnership with ECOWAS, the AU, and NEPAD.

Nigeria proposed that the themes to address the challenge should include: a common understanding of corruption; a definition of what constitutes corruption; a contribution towards the African position in terms of moving forward in the fight against corruption; types of corruption; the magnitude of corruption; the cost of corruption.

The African Ministers’ Conference recognised that mechanisms for fighting corruption should be linked to national integrity systems, and challenges posed by leadership and political elites were identified as another area of concern that requires attention. It has also been recognised that other professions such as auditing, banking, accounting and the legal profession. A call was made for independent monitors and evaluators to assist. The role of non-state actors was recognised and therefore discussions at the roundtable will be broadened to include traditional and religious leaders. The theme on law enforcement and cross-border cooperation, it has consistently been emphasised by those involved in the African Ministers’ Conference, should be linked with that of challenges of implementation as the former is determined by the latter.

There is a need for Africa to establish a database for presentations at anti-corruption forums. It was reported that the Nigerian government has pledged $50,000 to an African-wide survey on corruption. The African Union and NEPAD strongly supported this initiative.

Significant progress and much of the effort culminated in the successful hosting of Global Forum V in South Africa (Fifth Global Forum, 5 April 2007). The event was well attended and served to ensure that African perspectives are clearly articulated.
During the margins of the Global Forum V a meeting was held between the country champion, the Chairperson’s Office and the AUC, thereby ensuring ongoing policy dialogue and exchange.

Several Bureau meetings articulated a series of actions so as to ensure effectiveness there was a need for greater coordination and synergy between the Bureau of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Anti-Corruption Bodies meeting and the country champion.

A number of events have been organised within the terrain of anti-corruption over the years. These events culminated in the 5\textsuperscript{th} Global Forum on Anti-Corruption in South Africa. Collectively these events served to create a further momentum for the anti-corruption cause in Africa. Added emphasis needs to be placed on the ratification of the African Anti-Corruption Convention.

\textbf{The Public Sector and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)}

Apart from important issues such as fighting corruption and building the capabilities of African states, the African Ministers’ Conference for Public and Civil Service have also devised strategies around the crucial issue of post-conflict reconstruction and development. To date, the debate on post-conflict reconstruction and development has focused largely on the two areas of peace and security (read: military aspects) on the one hand, and economic and fiscal reconstruction on the other hand (World Bank, 1997: 4). The political and governance dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and development have received scant attention. More specifically, little focus has been placed on the crucial question of state-building, yet this is one of the most important aspects of post-conflict peace-building.

The African ministers have highlighted the politico-governance dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and development, and in particular the importance of state-building and its implications for post-conflict peace-building.
It is important to recognise that the continent has made significant advances in the area of addressing violent and deadly intra- and inter-state conflict (Murithi, 2006: 246). Indeed, the continent is safer today than it has been for the past four decades (DFA, April 2008). For example, over the course of 6 years the continent has battled 4 major armed conflicts and 3 coups d’état; in the preceding 40 years, it had to grapple with 26 armed conflicts and no fewer than 186 coups d’état (DFA, April 2008). Today, conflicts are resolved and prevented in part through the holding of regular, and competitive elections and political processes, albeit that many such conflicts still remain fragile. In spite of the gains made to date, conflicts continue to affect one in five people living in the continent. Of the world’s refugees, 30% are in Africa, and many of the refugees and internally displaced persons are women and children (DFA, April 2008). Complex emergencies continue to fester in Sudan, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the great lakes region. Sixty per cent of UN peacekeeping operations continue to be in the continent.

The best and most sustainable way to prevent conflicts from is through state-building oriented and anchored post-conflict peace-building initiatives. The ministers sought to provide a framework through which African ministers of public/civil service, organised through their political and engagement forum called the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service, could engage post-conflict reconstruction and development challenges in our continent.

The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service has articulated a Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development strategy that is largely in conformity with, and adding to the AU’s post-conflict peace-building strategy. The Constitutive Act of the AU, the founding covenant of the union, has as one of its core objectives the promotion of peace, security and development. The work and policy directives of the AU are underpinned by a commitment to “human security” and a move away from national security (DFA, April 2008). This means that there is a move away from security through armaments to security through sustainable development. The AU makes a dialectical
relationship between underdevelopment, marginalisation and insecurity (DFA, April 2008). Put differently, there can be no peace and security without development, and concomitantly no development without peace and security.

The AU’s Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework lays out the principles for reconstruction, reconstruction and development. The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service has supported these principles. The framework makes the case for an integrative approach to peace and security, supported by complimentary and equally important developmental, economic and socially normative policy framework and programmes.

Through the AU/NEPAD programme, African member states developed an African Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework in June 2005, and this framework was further refined in 2006. The process of developing the framework included the participation of civil society (NEPAD PCRD Framework, June 2005). This policy framework emphasises the link between the peace, security, humanitarian and development dimensions of peace-building and peace-keeping (AU PCRD Policy, 2006).

Essentially, the AU PCRD Policy Framework provides a strategy from which the Pan-African ministers’ programmes can develop their own context-specific plans, and add value by focusing on the critical niche of public service restructuring and state-building. Indeed, the AU PCRD Policy Framework “is intended as a guide for development of comprehensive policies and strategies that elaborate measures that seek to consolidate peace, promote sustainable development and pave the way for growth and regeneration in countries and regions emerging from conflict” (AU PCRD Policy, 2006). The AU PCRD framework document is underpinned by five core principles and these “constitute the basic minimum values and standards that inform action across all PCRD activities and Programmes” (AU PCRD Policy, 2006). These are:

- African leadership;
- national and local ownership;
- inclusiveness, equity and non-discrimination;
- cooperation and coherence; and
• capacity building for sustainability.

The AU/NEPAD framework distinguishes between structural and proximate causes of conflict. Structural factors include built-in societal factors such as the fabric of society, state repression, lacking of political legitimacy, political, economic and social marginalisation, and poor and corrupt governance.

Proximate causes, on the other hand, include those elements that contribute to conditions for violent conflict, such as capital flight, ethnic mobilisation and insecurity on the street. Triggers to deadly and violent conflict could be a single event, such as a political assassination, electoral fraud and political disputes.

The African ministers sought to avoid unnecessary duplication and competition with the AU PCRD framework; the ministers instead considered it important to give impetus to the core principle of capacity building for sustainability by focusing on the critical question of state-building. In making the case for a state-building approach to PCRD, the ministers emphasised the need to contain conflicts, and prevention the recurrence of conflict by emphasising there niche area of state building and reconstruction. The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service stresses in particular the following:

• public service reconstruction;
• building the capacity of the state to deliver services, with an emphasis on human resource management and development issues, skills, strategies and institutions;
• macro-organisation of the state, including processes and policy mechanisms relating to inter-governmental relations, delegation of powers and functions, and the micro-organisation of the state;
• structures to deliver systems, including IT, finance, human resources, and E-governance; and
• anti-corruption, with an emphasis on systems, processes, mechanisms, codes, and the political will to implements these.
The most important contribution ministers of public/civil service set out to make was to create viable public administration institutions as they placed the effort squarely on state-building, within a post-conflict environment. Ministers realised that the African crisis is essentially a crisis of governance and a crisis of the state. It is vital therefore that we bring the state back in.

African ministers of public/civil service have challenged the very definition of post-conflict reconstruction and development. For them, the definition of post-conflict reconstruction and development is highly contested, with serious implications for understanding the future role of ministers of public service. The term has been defined to encompass a variety of meanings ranging from basic post-conflict reconciliation to more broadly, reconciliation, recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. A serious challenge for definitions of post-conflict reconstruction and development is not to define it too broadly so that it becomes all things to all observers (Hizkias Assefa, 1993). But to date little emphasis has been placed on key elements of state-building, including public service reconstruction; building capacity of the state to deliver services; macro-organisation of the state; and anti-corruption. The African Union’s draft policy framework for PCRD defines the concept as “a comprehensive set of measures that seek to address the needs of countries emerging from conflict, including the needs of affected populations; prevent escalation of disputes; avoid relapse into violence; address the root causes of conflict; and consolidate sustainable peace” (AU PCRD Policy, 2006).

Former Chairperson of the African Ministers’ Conference, South African Minister for Public Service and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi at a gender roundtable held in Bujumbura, Burundi, on 7 April 2008:

“In post-conflict countries, the work of government and civil society should coalesce to address development and to empower people, thereby taking issues of gender very seriously. It should be noted that conflict and wars affect men and women differently; therefore there should be a concerted effort to understand these different realities. Policies that are put in place to address specific areas in an attempt to rebuild a nation will impact on men and women differently. It is therefore critical that gender issues are taken into consideration when issues of development are being addressed.”
The scope of the AU’s PCRD strategy encompasses six indicative elements (AU PCRD Policy, 2006):

- security;
- humanitarian/emergency assistance;
- political governance and transition;
- socio-economic reconstruction and development;
- human rights, justice and reconciliation; and
- women and gender.

African ministers of public/civil service have long appreciated that the AU strategy emphasises the key dimension of “political governance and transition”, and to focus on particular on the key question of state-building.

In focusing on the state-building niche to answer this question, we advance the idea that African ministers of public/civil service highlighted a number of key aspects, including: public service reconstruction; building state capacity; the macro-organisation of the state; systems to deliver services; and anti-corruption measures. Notions of the minimalist state were vigorously challenged by ministers as they made the case for strong and capable states. Such a capable African state does not play an overbearing and dictatorial role in African societies. Nor is it a Leviathan or patriarchal state. The capable African state in fact serves the common good and is a positive force in African societies.

The African Ministers’ Conference has prioritised post-conflict reconstruction, and the special case of ministers of public service, since at least 1996. In that year, a regional conference on administration development was held in Windhoek in Namibia, with the aim to modernise post-conflict public services. The Pan-African ministers took their hint from United Nations General Assembly resolutions and former United Nations Secretary General Boutros-Boutros Ghali’s “An Agenda for Peace of 1992”, which addressed the matter of post-conflict reconstruction (UN Secretariat, 1992). The ministers used these as a guide, and subscribed to the idea that, in the 21st Century, the
needs of a post-conflict country proceed in the direction of ensuring social justice, economic development, access to quality services, decentralised administrations and freedom of the media, among others. Burundi has faced acute post-conflict challenges for some time now, and the Pan-African ministers focused on the Burundi case as vital for them to learn lessons from, and to make inputs that would be beneficial to that state. The causes of conflict was not ethnic, regional or religious in that country, albeit that in 1993, Hutus dominated state institutions and problems begun to emerge. Long negotiations supervised by Tanzania and South Africa helped to resolve the conflict.

Within the context of the Pan-African ministers, Burundi presented its experience as a post-conflict country and reflected on the causes and effects of conflicts on the African continent. Burundi recognised the roles of South Africa and that of the African ministers of public/civil service for assistance in maintaining peace and stability. The Burundi case demonstrated the importance of focusing attention on matters relating to public service, and reinforce our overall theme here of building the capabilities of the African state for effective service delivery. Ministers in the African Conference noted the need for greater synergies to be established with the AU Commission and its own initiative on post-conflict reconstruction. In this respect, the AUC was urged to ensure the harmonisation of this work with the Peace and Security Council.

Post-Conflict Case Studies

Burundi

Burundi has been one of the major case studies for African Ministers’ Conference. Ministers have identified key peace-building priorities, including those related to security, human rights and governance and state-building. The Peace-building Commission and the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) has become the channel for coordinating international assistance, and those actors involved in peace-building efforts should
endeavour to promote a delicate balance between international engagement and a respect for Burundi's sovereignty. Ministers have stressed that civil service reform and state-building will be important to ensure that the state has a governance capacity beyond just the outskirts of Bujumbura.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The PCRD process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) had a two-pronged focus: establishment of inclusive leadership structure, and rebuilding state institutions. A Government of National Unity and Transition was established in July 2003 following five years of protracted conflict. The Government of National Unity is comprised four vice-presidents and a council of ministers. A parliament has also been convened to represent the views of the Congolese people.

One of the key lessons emerging from the DRC is the importance of implementing the provisions of the Inclusive and Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in December 2002. The peace-building process in the DRC has been slowed down by the failure of transition institutions to speed up the elaboration of fundamental laws and to promote the re-unification of the country through the appointment of provincial governors and vice-governors, so vital for state-building decentralisation efforts.

Consolidating democracy in the DRC is crucial for sustaining peace. Elections were held in the DRC on 31 July 2006 under difficult conditions in which 33 candidates contested the presidency and more than 9,780 candidates contested the 500 parliamentary seats.

Transforming and building the DRC state and public service are key priorities of the Transitional Government. Directing and implementing the public service reform agenda falls under the auspices of the DRC Ministry for Public Services with the support of the South African Department of Public Service and Administration.
The Republic of Mozambique

The past 16 years have seen a gradual return to normalcy in Mozambique, the restoration of basic socio-economic infrastructure and a firm and determined entrenchment of modern democratic and social inclusiveness by the government. Immediately after the end of the armed conflict, the Government of Mozambique put in place a development strategy that mainly oriented towards poverty alleviation through sustainable growth. The key components of this development strategy were: development of human resources, rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, restoration of agriculture produce; and incentives to private investment.

The main objective in the post-conflict period has been to focus on strengthening public administration and public sector reform efforts with a view to develop a modern and effective state that enables private investment and focuses on public service delivery. The civil service code of conduct is that public servants implement programmes of the government of the day without favour, bias or discrimination with regard to people’s political party affiliations, ethnicity, race or beliefs. Mozambique’s reforms were guided by the participation of civil society organisations, private sector, international organisations and donors. The highlight of the reforms includes the launch of the Global Strategy of Public Sector Reforms in 2001. The reform built on previous reform efforts aimed at modernising the state apparatus and gave specific emphasis to fighting poverty. Other key developments related to the establishment of the National Training System in Public Administration focusing on middle and senior management. Gender mainstreaming has also been a key priority, and government has established quotas for women in parliament and civil service.

The Sudan

The Sudan case study reflects on priorities considered as significant and reliable. The Republic of the Sudan is a democratic, decentralised and multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious state where all these diversities co-
exist. The Sudan is decentralised with the National Government, Southern Sudan Government and state-level Government with 26 states and Local Government. Sudan’s post-conflict reconstruction interventions are geared toward a quick launch for economic development. The Sudan experience is based on a comprehensive peace agreement to which local experts contributed significantly.

Sudan has made efforts to rehabilitate and develop the southern states which were devastated by war. Some of the interventions include inculcating a culture of peace and confidence building among all citizens; advocacy and capacity building; and the empowerment of women as a prerequisite for socio-economic development. The public service is one key instrument through which economic activity that results in job creation is promoted. The project for public service rehabilitation is called the national programme for the public services reform.

**The Building Blocs of Continental Governance: Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**

One of the chairpersons of the African Ministers’ Conference for Public/Civil Service, Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi once noted “the importance of focussing attention on the role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in implementation and to have a focussed dialogue on their role in public administration” (Ministers Committee, 29–30 August 2005). So why are Regional Economic Communities so important for the African Ministers’ Conference? Several reasons present themselves.

The Constitutive Act of the AU regards Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks of continental union. The objectives contained in the Constitutive Act are, among others, to “accelerate the political and economic integration of the continent” (Article 3(c)), and to “coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities” (Article 3(l)).
The Accra Declaration of African Heads of State and Government of 2007 also agreed “to rationalize and strengthen the Regional Economic Communities, and harmonize their activities … so as to lead to the creation of an African Common Market, through the stages set in the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty), with a revised and shorter time frame to be agreed upon in order to accelerate the economic and, where possible, political integration” (AU Summit, Accra, Ghana, 2007).

The Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) was adopted in 1991 and came into force in May 1994. The Abuja Treaty reiterated the objectives outlined in the FAL, including the need to promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance, as well as an endogenous and self-sustained development. The Treaty also aimed to create institutional frameworks and mechanisms to coordinate and harmonise policies among existing and future economic communities in order to foster the gradual establishment of the Community.

The RECs have been designated as building blocks for the realisation of the economic and political integration of Africa. There is, therefore, need to ascertain the extent to which this objective is being achieved. The fact of the matter, as this section clearly shows, is that Africa is still a long way from the achievement of the goals of political and economic integration. While the RECs have tried as much as possible to advance along the six stages of the Abuja Treaty, in reality they are very much behind even what was considered in 1991 as a generous estimate of the time it would take to achieve economic integration. REC’s are expected to promote balanced and equitable regional integration in order to help achieve sustained and sustainable development in the continent, and help to free ordinary working people of Africa’s respective region’s from the scourges of unemployment, poverty and underdevelopment (DFA, 2008).

The first challenge posed is lack of convergence. The Abuja Treaty calls for the strengthening of existing RECs and the establishment of new ones where
there are gaps. While the Treaty does not elaborate on what it would mean to strengthen the RECs, the underlying assumption (as provided for in the 1998 Protocol on the relations between the AEC and the RECs) is that the capacity of the RECs to achieve convergence towards the various stages outlined in the Treaty would be bolstered.

An overview of the RECs progress indicates that several years after the adoption of the Abuja Treaty, certain RECs have not yet achieved the foundational stage within the envisaged timeframes. UMA, CEN-SAD, ECOWAS and IGAD are yet to fully establish Free Trade Areas. EAC, COMESA, and SADC have indicative plans to move towards a Common Market as early as 2009, 2014 and 2015, respectively. The approach to integration seems to be based more on deadlines than concrete achievements (Mwanasali, 2004: 6).

The RECs, which are expected to serve as building blocks in the integration process (see Kornegay, 2007), have been constrained by a number of factors, particularly the overlapping memberships, the insufficient inter-RECs cooperation and lack of coordination and harmonisation at the continental level (Audit of the AU, 11-138). The Panel recommends that while abiding by the decision of the Assembly to recognise eight RECs, a strategy be devised for them to play a more pro-active role in fast-tracking integration at regional and continental levels. It is here where the Pan-African ministers identified a niche as far as RECs are concerned: to address political and governance questions as the sub-regional level in the continent.

The 1998 Protocol on Relations between the AEC and the RECs clearly identified the lead roles to be played by member states in the RECs configurations, and the AEC (Mwanasali, 2004: 12). The OAU Secretariat was to be the Secretariat of the Community, and following the transition to the African Union, the African Union Commission (AUC) is now responsible for the execution of the duties and mandates for the OAU/AEC Secretariat.
Article 88 of the Abuja Treaty clearly establishes the relationship between the Community and RECs. A vertical and horizontal cooperation mechanism was provided for within and across the RECs, as well as between the RECs and the AEC secretariat. The Community was to be established mainly through the coordination, harmonisation and progressive integration of the activities of RECs with roles for member states, the Community and the RECs.

The AU Commission has a key monitoring and evaluative role to play in determining the stage at which a REC should be placed as provided for in the Treaty, and in the implementation of harmonised and rationalised policies, measures and programmes of the RECs in order to ensure that the Treaty timeframes are adhered to. The Pan-African ministers could collaborate with RECs in helping them to develop crucial monitoring and evaluation skills.

The Protocol on REC’s upholds the objective of coordinating and harmonising policies between existing and future RECs for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union. Pan-African ministers can play a role here too of working with RECs to help them to realise their goal.

From the outset of the integration process, it was envisaged that the RECs would be formed along five geographical regions. To that end, SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, UMA and ECCAS were the five RECs that signed the 1998 Protocol. EAC, CEN-SAD and IGAD were later recognised as RECs by the AU.

The development of legislatures and courts has been sporadic across the RECs. Even where courts exist, they are often not resorted to by nationals or entities of member states, who more often than not resort to domestic courts or political and diplomatic mechanisms. Most of the courts have limited jurisdiction within member states. This may be attributed to the fact that RECs have been viewed as a collaborative effort by member states rather than sanctioning entities. These are problems that Pan-African ministers will have to contend with as they seek to make RECs key platforms for their continental engagement.
So far two regional parliaments have been established, namely, ECOWAS and EAC. They comprise representatives of national legislatures who are not directly elected, and most lack legal competence to make laws as no such powers are ceded to them by the member states. EAC has limited legislative powers while the ECOWAS Parliament envisages that it will have legislative powers after its members have been directly elected. Information flow is not well developed to enable the parliamentarians to play useful representative roles. Often the citizenry of RECs are unaware of what such parliaments debate or achieve. Linkages between the work of the regional parliaments and national parliaments have not been well developed. Indeed, national parliaments rarely debate issues of regional integration.

Economic, social and cultural councils also exist in certain RECs. They are formed to serve as linkages between the nationals of member states and the RECs and to promote popular participation by non-state actors in integration activities and programmes. In practice, these bodies are not well known or operational, and have a very small membership base. The active involvement of the academia, intellectuals, research institutions, media and civil society, private sector and consumer associations is key in providing the impetus for member states to adhere to commitments undertaken at regional level and to create appropriate investment-, production- and development-oriented environments.

The AU and NEPAD recognise five regional groupings in Africa, namely Southern Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and the Horn, West Africa, and North Africa. It is these five Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which form the foundation of an eventual political and economic union of Africa. These five groups are regarded as the building blocs of the African Union, and the Pan-African Ministers’ Conference has also agreed to engage them on political governance and public administration questions. A challenge for the Conference is to focus on strengthening these RECs, through decentralisation, and prioritising provinces, municipalities and local
government. A key issue is that of enhancing the planning capacities of these entities.

So it is clear that RECs have vital roles to play in advancing the governance agenda of the African continent. Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi advanced a cogent proposal for the role RECs can play in the African Ministers’ Conference:

- in partnership with the AU and NEPAD, there needs to be a focused institutional and individual capacity assessment of RECs to handle current NEPAD commitments and pipeline programmes and projects;
- RECs and country nodal points needs to coordinate their work better, and they also need to streamline their work with continental organisations;
- an immediate capacity building initiative should be instituted that should focus on building capabilities for policy analysis and contract project management capacities for large scale infrastructure projects; and
- RECs, country nodal points and private sector contractors should collaborate more closely in order to identify challenges, obstacles for partnerships and the delivery of infrastructure programmes, and iron out these problems.

RECs have crucial roles to play in the areas of implementation and monitoring and evaluation of African Agenda policies, and key aspects of the African Ministers’ Conference, such as the African Public Service Charter (African Charter, July 2008). Indeed, RECs should play practical roles in contributing towards improved public sector performance and regional integration. It is therefore, critical that the lessons learned from regional efforts be shared. For example, councils can support national efforts to implement the principles set out within the African Public Service Charter through acting as a regional platform for exchange and learning for their member governments. In this regard, the Public Service Charter must be reviewed and perhaps, institutionalised within the framework of the AU so that it can become a
meaningful instrument that guides national public administration conduct (African Charter, July 2008). Existing models can be used to establish concrete links between NEPAD programme priorities and regional agendas.

E-governance and Free Open Source Software

In general state-building debates, micro-organisational questions typically enjoy little attention. Yet questions of systems and information are vital spokes in the cog of state-building wheels.

The ECA has expressed the apt view that “information and communication technologies are useful for promoting transparency, openness and knowledge exchanges in the many areas of society – and managing the affairs of government is no exception” (ECA, 2005: vi). In this respect there is no gainsaying that African states continue to face the challenge of providing integrated services to African publics. African ministers have made the point that various structures and systems have to be put in place to provide such services, including information technology, finance, human resources, and E-governance. In the age of the global information technology revolution, technology should be utilised to enhance the delivery of services. E-governance is not about computers and technology; it is rather about using these instruments to transform government. The challenge is to use information and technology to make government services more accessible to citizens by making services more effective and efficient. A key goal of E-government is to put individuals, families and communities at the centre of networks of knowledge, services and accountability.

There has been logic to the African Conference of Ministers for Public Service and Administration insistence on the utilisation of E-governance tools. The gains of E-government include cost savings and efficiency, improved quality of service delivery, increasing the capacity of government, and increased transparency and accountability.
E-government also throws up challenges for African states. In too many instances in the continent, government service provision is too disjointed, expensive and complicated. E-government therefore challenges African governments to use technology so as to transform service provision into simple, cost-effective offerings that are consistent, complete and designed to serve the citizen or customer.

African governments should realise the value of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) as it provides an effective alternative to reliance on expensive software and licences. FOSS is proving to be particularly useful in the area of E-government. Government should encourage greater usage of FOSS in the public and private sector, and it could lead by example by encouraging the certification of more individuals in FOSS. Through these and other actions, governments will then be in the forefront of ensuring more effective ICT management and more effective delivery of services. With the use of FOSS, governments can have much wider impacts on society, and they can facilitate open communications between governments and its citizenry. It will be important for governments to recognise the co-existence of different software platforms and applications within public sector entities.

The presentation on value of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) was done jointly by the Chairperson’s Office and the members of FOSSFA. The presentation was directed at demonstrating the value of FOSS for E-government and African development. It is noted that FOSSFA is central to the promotion of FOSS across African governments.

The approach to FOSS is that it provides an effective alternative to the reliance currently placed on expensive foreign software and licenses. FOSS is proving to be particularly useful in the terrain of E-governance and in the management of government activities. Because of this, there have been a number of positive experiences across many countries some have taken steps forward towards ensuring wider use of FOSS.
The range of experiences with FOSS is beginning to demonstrate wide and immense savings from the utilisation of FOSS. It is anticipated that further usage of FOSS by governments will serve to encourage wider use of FOSS in the public and private sector. As part of the strategy of enhancing the use of FOSS, attention increasingly needs to be focused on the certification of individuals in FOSS. Through this and related actions, governments will then be at the forefront of ensuring more effective ICT management and more effective delivery of services.

The African ministers realised that, in order to establish further momentum and ensure African benefit from FOSS, further support is needed from member states. FOSS has been utilised very effectively in the terrain of education and has increased the possibility of availing ICT. A conference which focused on FOSS, with the sub-theme of “Knowledge Economy”, was convened in March 2008 in Senegal. The conference noted that Free and Open Software provides a very useful opportunity and can allow governments to have a wider impact. It was noted that attention needs to be focused on establishing hybrid solutions, and that FOSS usage allows for changes to be made with systems at minimal cost. FOSS also facilitates open communication between governments and its citizenry.

In taking forward the usage of FOSS, there needs to be recognition of the importance of the co-existence of different software platforms and applications within public sector organisations. In practice, there is no need to adopt one system over another. It is further noted that the movement towards FOSS usage in government is growing and a number of governments have made decisions on the full utilisation of FOSS for the delivery of services.

**UNPAN Portal**

A presentation was made on the value of the UNPAN portal by the Office of the Chairperson. It was noted that the portal was established to support the development of efficient public administration systems and competency in public services across the globe. The online services include training
materials, information on public administration, information on conferences, and other events and directories of public administration and finance.

In providing a historical overview of the portal, it was noted that there is significant participation from African countries and African partner organisations. Information on visitors to the portal reveals that the demand for information on African Public Administration is very high. In highlighting the benefits of UNPAN, the appeal was that member states focus attention on popularising the portal and provide information through African partners on their own experiences. In this respect, it is sensible to identify contact persons for the provision of country information to UNPAN partners.

It is noted that the UNPAN portal is a very useful instrument for self-evaluation of usage patterns. It provides information on the kinds of material accessed, profile of users, even gender breakdowns. The portal can be considered a south-south resource as two thirds of the users are from developing countries. African users are particularly active in the drawing down of material on training. The site is helping to create an African Community of Practice.

African usage has been uneven. However, given current trends it is necessary for all countries to identify focal points for the placing of reliable information on the portal. In this respect, all countries need to work with the UNPAN African regional partners to ensure that their information is appropriately uploaded.

In terms of challenges, there is need to get ministers to support online regional centres (ORCs), and provide information that would enhance Africa’s stature on the interactive portals. It is vital the African sub-regional and continental perspectives are thoroughly captured on the UNPAN Portal.
The African Management Development Institute Network

Just as there cannot be sustainable democratic development in Africa without the state, so there can be no sustained governance capable and skilled leadership founded on an ethos of people-centred democracy. Progress is depended largely on a public sector that is properly trained and equipped to deal with the impact of globalisation and the many international trends that impact on development and service delivery. Strengthening the capacity and capability of African leadership in the public sector to critically assess current needs and formulate and implement African solutions to African challenges is thus of paramount importance to development in the region.

One of the initiatives undertaken by the African Ministers’ Conference to achieve the goal of sustainable training and skills development was the establishment of the African Development Institute Network (AMDIN). AMDIN convened a series of AMDIN biennial conferences and general assemblies. The assembly elected a council of AMDIN that is now representative of all regions in the continent (AMDIN Report, August 2005).

AMDIN set out to help address the challenges of human resources practices and management in the African public service; inadequate human resources practices; remuneration and conditions of employment; the brain drain confronting the continent (AMDIN Framework on Capacity Development, July 2008).

AMDIN also identified the problem of foreign influences through “best practice transfers”, and the inability of Management Development Institutes to participate effectively in policy and planning processes (AMDIN Framework on Capacity Development, July 2008). It has been discovered that there is an absence of national, sub-regional and continental development and training policies. To this should be added the fact that there often too many organisations working at cross-purposes and at loggerheads with one another. An important challenge is the weaknesses in the areas of monitoring and evaluation systems. Budget cuts and financial pressures exacerbate
problems in the HR field (AMDIN Framework on Capacity Development, July 2008).

How does AMDIN propose to intervene and help to alleviate the problem? The past year saw AMDIN growing from an idea that existed mainly on paper into a functioning organisation. It has also managed to strengthen its footprint significantly into the Francophone countries of West and Central Africa, with the government of Senegal offering to host a regional office for AMDIN at their National School for Administration. African public sector training institutions are developing a loyalty to the Network and raising their expectations regarding the potential positive impact of the Network on their own performance.

In a very short space of time AMDIN has developed its organisational profile to such an extent that the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) signed it up as one of its regional partners on the continent – a role which will truly benefit both networks in terms of raising the profile and quality of information about African public administration that is available globally and addressing the dominance of the Western nations in knowledge production in this field. AMDIN members will benefit directly from the relationship with UNPAN by gaining free access to the electronic tools for online training facilitation and administration, for which the UN holds licenses. These could significantly contribute to productivity improvements as African MDIs are venturing into using mixed medium approaches to training with significantly less financial outlay if each institution had to acquire licenses in their own right.

An important activity by AMDIN is the delivery of the second training interventions for MDIs, which is supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The past three years for example saw AMDIN working with many MDIs officials from across the continent. AMDIN makes a point of conducting its business in a range of languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Arabic. It is anticipated that the next cohort will be in French and the last will be in Portuguese. The feedback received regarding AMDIN
programmes has been positive from its MDI clients and there is clearly a demand for further opportunities that included exchanges amongst MDIs (AMدين Report, August 2005).

**AAPAM**

The African Association of Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) is an important continental association that plays a crucial role in the sphere of public administration in different parts of Africa. In an effort to bring about an interactive partnership with this organisation, the dpsa is currently working with the different stakeholders (academics, civil society, public sector bodies and practitioners) to establish a South African AAPAM National Chapter.

A Consultative Workshop was held on 20 July 2007 – amongst others, MPs from the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration attended the workshop. A Steering Committee has been formed and meets regularly to prepare for the launch of the National Chapter. The major output for the 2008/09 financial year will be the launching of the AAPAM South African National Chapter, which is scheduled for August 2008.

During this period, added emphasis was placed on ensuring that all governance issues were adequately dealt with and that an effective and manageable programme is established for the future. The AMDIN programme, as approved by the Council, includes a focus on knowledge production, the strengthening of MDI capacities and the development of AMDIN as an organisation. A number of research initiatives and partnership activities, including establishing AMDIN as a partner in UNPAN, were undertaken by AMDIN.

In the planning process, specific attention has focused on resource mobilisation for AMDIN. In this respect, AMDIN conducted a detailed analysis of different scenarios it faces. Through this process it was concluded that membership fees will not be able to cover operational and programme costs and there will be a need to focus attention on mobilising resources from development partners. It was constantly noted that further support from member states was essential in developing MDIs and in ensuring the success of AMDIN.
There were notable regional entities like ESAMI that were not yet evident in AMDIN. AMDIN alluded that its initial emphasis and take up had been with national MDIs, but undertook to reach out to such entities, and indeed to relevant regional and continental entities and networks in its prospective membership campaigning.

The Executive of AMDIN had calculated that even if 40 MDIs joined AMDIN at the non-discount subscription rate of US$ 3,000 per annum, compared to the present 5 members, AMDIN would still have a 90% dependence on donors or grants for its intermediate scenario. Mozambique stressed the importance of MDIs for national and continent-wide development, and in particular, their powerful role in facilitating collaboration and shared learning. Accordingly, countries should resolve to contribute additionally to AMDIN through their MDIs.

The Chairperson accepted the AMDIN suggestion that the Bureau send a resolution for consideration and adoption by the 2008 Ministers' Conference that countries earmark in the funds they assign for foreign assistance or engagement more appreciable contributions to AMDIN from their MDIs' own subscription of $3,000 each.

Some international partners, such as UNDP, have come out in support of AMDIN. AMDIN features very prominently in the Preparatory Assistance to the African Governance and Public Administration Programme (AGPAP). This assistance is deliberately structured in a manner to assist with the institutionalisation of AMDIN and to put it on the path to self-sustainability in the medium to long term. This assistance will see AMDIN embarking on an ambitious programme of strengthening the network and consulting on the real needs of member institutions through the hosting of three regional conferences, starting in Dakar, Senegal between 5 and 7 June, moving to Nairobi, Kenya by mid-June and ending in Southern Africa during the first week of July.
As an interim measure, the Academy has committed itself to financing a substantial part of the core funding of the AMDIN secretariat over the medium term, by sponsoring 50% of the remuneration associated to the CEO post and a further 100% post for an additional staff member, in addition to making available office infrastructure and associated running costs of the Secretariat. This constitutes the single largest member institution contribution, showing a serious commitment to the incubation and growth of the African MDI Network.

**African Public Service and Strategic Partnerships**

Over the past decade, we have seen almost all of Africa’s development partners becoming involved in supporting various aspects of the African Agenda. Since the lunch of the G8-Africa Action Plan in Canada, in 2002 under the auspices of NEPAD, the continent’s external partners have become involved in public sector interventions along African priority lines. The G8-Africa Action Plan recognises the important role of African leadership in defining Africa’s development strategy. It commits G8 governments to marshal resources and expertise in support of African development. Pan-African ministers came out in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted at the UN Summit in September 2000. The MDGs was also endorsed by the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. Both the MDGs and the WSSD focus on halving poverty and improving the welfare of the world’s poorest by 2015 through a global partnership for development. Both compacts also make commitment in the areas of peace, security, human rights, democracy, good governance and development.

The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service has made the case for the continent’s development partners to coordinate their efforts more effectively amongst themselves, as well as with African partners. The Pan-African ministers also expect the donor partners to strategise more coherently for both short-term rehabilitation and long-term institutional development within the public sector. For instance, most national parliaments have enacted or are in the process of enacting legislation that specifically deals with
corruption, transition and development. There is need for more synergetic international technical cooperation in public administration reforms. The ECA has observed that African governments have made commitments in the areas of greater accountability and democratic governance; African states and inter-state institutions harbour clear expectations from overseas development partners. First, donors must live up to commitments to provide more aid to Africa – as part of the Monterrey pledges. Second, they must do more to provide better aid – through harmonised procedures, general budget support and predictable disbursements. Third, they have to do more to ensure that their policies for aid, trade and debt relief are consistent with African efforts to come closer to reaching the MDGs. Fourth, they need to work with African governments in systematically tracking actions to enhance development outcomes – through mechanisms for mutual review (ECA, 2005: viii).

The diagram below provides an illustration of the points contained in the Paris Declaration:

African ministers have been insistent that it is very important for African policy formulaters to be alive to the fact that aid dependence can potentially undermine the quality of governance and public sector institutions by weakening accountability, encouraging rent-seeking and corruption, fomenting
conflict over control of aid funds, siphoning off scarce talent from the bureaucracy, and alleviating pressures to reform inefficient policies and institutions. Like the AU, NEPAD and the APRM Panel, Pan-African ministers have supported the idea that donors should develop less costly and less intrusive ways of disseminating state-of-the-art knowledge on public sector reform in developing countries. Ministers have called for more predictable levels of unconditional aid, that should be based on the principle of mutual accountability and mutual responsibility, on the basis of which African states and donor partners would have obligations to realise the goals of governance, democratisation, peace and security, development, and growth.

Lessons learnt from international technical assistance projects to local governments show that historical and contextual conditions have a very large impact on capacity building efforts in countries of transition; political values have to be developed and an organisational infrastructure to express them. Ultimately, the knowledge and skills of senior managers must be cultivated, to assist them in nurturing the social capital needed for them to govern effectively. Another area where international technical assistance is needed urgently is in public procurement reforms. Pan-African ministers have stressed the need for public procurement reform as this is one of the most problematic areas as it touches vested interests, yet it is vital for the improvement of the lives of individuals.

The African ministers have long been clear that international funding partners should bolster the resources of the Conference, and support the policy priorities of the Conference, not their own ideas. The Chairperson of the Conference prepared a proposal for financial assistance, which covered the following areas: Africa Public Service Charter, All Africa Public Sector Innovations Awards, Africa Public Service Day and the effective implementation of the regional, continental and international anti-corruption Conventions.
The proposal was submitted within the UNDP system, and the Office of the Chairperson continued working with UNDP to ensure that the programme was approved for implementation.

In terms of European Union (EU) funding, the Ministers’ Conference long expressed concern about time lapse between the commitment and the failure to conclude all matters relating to the transfer of resources. The EU took a decision that resources are no longer available for the governance and public administration programme.

**Concluding Reflections**

In this documentary we looked at the role and work of the African Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Service, established in 1994. The documentary considered how, with this initiative, the African ministers of public and civil service took a unique step to establish one of the continent’s first inter-state platforms for transnational policy development in the areas of governance, public administration, civil service and service delivery. The documentary argued that the African ministers’ forum mushroomed into a forum for norms-creating, mapping out common African interests, establishing common rules, and creating common institutions in the areas of governance and public administration. Today, the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service is regarded as one of the foremost inter-state policy learning networks, and has helped to craft principles, collect data, exchange information, identified critical areas for intervention, created frameworks for cooperation, and developed programmes of action in the areas of governance and public administration. From 2003 onwards, the African Conference became a platform convened under the auspices of the African Union.

We have noted that the African Ministers’ Conference of Public/Civil Service have located their operations within the framework of the African Agenda. Indeed, the African Ministers’ Conference seized the opportunity to engage Africa’s renewed Pan-Africanism, a new Continentalism, by committing to
developing policies that will advance public and civil service and administration in Africa.

The documentary reminded readers that the African crisis could essentially be regarded as a crisis of the state. As such the African Conference of Ministers has opted to emphasise the critical need for state-building in the continent. They have worked tirelessly over the course of the past decade and a half to develop a broad strategic framework for identifying long-term capacity building needs of African states. Looking back, there is no doubt that the African Ministers have succeeded in putting onto the continental agenda the critical questions of African civil service and state-building.

The African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service took a strategic decision to conduct their work within the framework of the African Agenda – the continental policy regime which outlines the continent’s set of post-Cold War, post-apartheid development, political and socio-economic priorities. As such, the African Conference of Ministers ensured that their work is developed in close synergy with key continental institutions and programmes such as the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

An important area that the African Conference of Ministers has emphasised over the course of the past fifteen years has been the challenge of creating viable public administration institutions as the Conference emphasised the question of capacity building for service delivery. Ministers recognised that African states continue to face the daunting challenge of delivering services by putting citizens at the centre of public service planning and operations. This stress on the need for pro-poor and people-centred service delivery represents a major departure from the old dispensation through which governments provided services “for” people as opposed to working “in partnership with” people.
The Pan-African Ministers’ Conference has recognised that the continent’s citizens deserve public services that are people-centred and people-driven, and that are characterised by equity, quality, timeousness and strong codes of ethics.

Ministers have emphasised that African states also need new breeds of civil servants that display a number of key attributes and characteristics. Public servants should be courteous when providing services to the public by listening to their problems, apologising when necessary and serving people with a smile. They should respect all citizens, irrespective of background, gender, colour or creed. The public service needs to develop service standards, provide information, seek service delivery solutions and go beyond the call of duty. This aims at delivering quality services and making citizens look forward to receiving world-class integrated service delivery. This could be achieved by anticipating customer needs through the introduction of regular customer surveys on the type of services citizens would want to receive.

During the 3rd Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in 2001, the African Conference of Ministers negotiated the Public Service Charter. The Charter was supported by the Governance and Public Administration Capacity Development programme adopted at the 4th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in 2003, known as the Stellenbosch Declaration. It was adopted by 38 African states. While it should be understood that the Charter is yet to be adopted by all African states, or by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU as an official and legal instrument of the AU, it does represent the Conference’s flagship programme. It serves as the flagship programmes of the Pan-African Ministers’ Conference, developed as a central framework to streamline public service effectiveness across Africa. The Charter has been hailed as being the most comprehensive Charter of Public Service that has emerged at the multilateral level.

The importance of the APSD is that it enables ministers to:

- reflect on the function of the public service – its mission, objectives, programmes and projects, challenges and successes;
give recognition to and make known the importance of the civil service, its positive contributions and benefits to public servants, population, civil society, private sector and government;

motivate and encourage public servants to continue the good work done and to come up with new initiatives and innovations; and

prepare the public service and administration for a better future by proposing change for the social well-being of the population.

The All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards (AAPSIA) is another priority area for the Ministers’ Conference. AAPSIA is the brainchild of the 4th African Conference of Ministers. AAPSIA seeks to enhance knowledge exchange and development through working closely with other developmental partners and governance and public administration. AAPSIA is at the centre of Africa’s broader governance and public administration programme. This programme is aimed at building capacity in the public sector across the continent. The AAPSIA initiative is part of bigger endeavour by the African ministers to cultivate an enabling environment within the public sector for the development and nurturing of innovative ideas and initiatives. The express aim of AAPSIA is the celebration of innovation in Africa and the awards celebrate brilliance within the continent’s public sector that would otherwise remain unknown and unacknowledged.

On the question of public service effectiveness, African ministers of public/civil service agreed very early on to focus their efforts on the niche of developing a capacity building strategy for state-building. Ministers agreed that strengthening public service effectiveness requires a flexible and phased capacity development strategy. Such a strategy highlighted a number of key aspects, including: public service reconstruction; building state capacity; the macro-organisation of the state; systems to deliver services; and anti-corruption measures. Notions of the minimalist state were challenged by African Ministers, and the Conference made the case for strong and capable states. Ministers have in mind states that are not overbearing and dictatorial; such states are not Leviathan or patriarchal states. Instead, the capable
African state in fact serves the common good and is a positive force in African societies.

The African Conference of Ministers has played an active role in the realm of post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD). Apart from important issues such as fighting corruption and building the capabilities of African states, the African Ministers Conference for Public and Civil Service have also devised strategies around the crucial issue of post-conflict reconstruction and development. To date, the debate on post-conflict reconstruction and development has focused largely on the two areas of peace and security (read: military aspects) on the one hand, and economic and fiscal reconstruction on the other hand. The political and governance dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and development have received scant attention. More specifically, little focus has been placed on the crucial question of state-building, yet this is one of the most important aspects of post-conflict peace-building.

The African ministers have highlighted the politico-governance dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction and development, and in particular the importance of state-building and its implications for post-conflict peace-building.

In their attempts to bring into life viable public administration institutions within a post-conflict environment in the continent, African ministers of public/civil service put the question of fighting corruption firmly on the agenda. The Ministers’ Conference agreed that the challenges posed by corruption should not be underestimated; these consequences are often devastating as corruption negatively impact on development, governance and service delivery processes.

Ministers decided to establish structure which caters for African Anti-corruption bodies. Rooting out the scourge of corruption requires comprehensive responses which place emphasis on the systems, processes, mechanisms, codes and political will to address this huge problem. African ministers have recognised that corruption is a structural phenomenon, not just
confined to Africa, but is a global reality, plaguing developed and developing countries alike. Corruption is rooted in relationships between individuals and organisations in the developing and developed worlds, and corrupt practices include theft, fraud, bribery, extortion, nepotism, patronage and laundering of illicit proceeds. Corruption typically destabilises governance and development processes, and impacts profoundly on the poor. The supply side of corruption must be slowed down as much as the demand side.

Apart from progress in the important area of fighting corruption, the Ministers’ Conference endorsed the perspective of both the AU and its development programme NEPAD, which regard Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks of continental union. The African Ministers’ Conference for Public/Civil Service saw RECs as important vehicles for implementation and policy dialogue. The documentary was thus correct in reminding readers that the Constitutive Act of the AU regards Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks of continental union and identifies their goals as those of accelerating the political and economic integration of the continent. The African Conference of Ministers has supported the position of the Accra Declaration of African Heads of State and Government of 2007 which agreed to rationalise and strengthen the RECs. The African Conference of Ministers has advanced a cogent proposal for the role RECs can play in the African Ministers Conference:

- in partnership with the AU and NEPAD, there needs to be a focused institutional and individual capacity assessment of RECs to handle current NEPAD commitments and pipeline programmes and projects;
- RECs and country nodal points needs to coordinate their work better, and they also need to streamline their work with continental organisations;
- an immediate capacity building initiative should be instituted that should focus on building capabilities for policy analysis and contract project management capacities for large scale infrastructure projects;
• RECs, country nodal points and private sector contractors should collaborate more closely in order to identify challenges, obstacles for partnerships and the delivery of infrastructure programmes, and iron out these problems.

In moving on to the important question of the role of information and communication technologies in promoting governance and service delivery, as well as effective service delivery, the documentary found that African ministers have made the point that various structures and systems have to be put in place to provide such services, including information technology, finance, human resources, and E-governance. In the age of the global information technology revolution, technology should be utilised to enhance the delivery of services. E-government is not about computers and technology; it is rather about using these instruments to transform government. The challenge is to use information and technology to make government services more accessible to citizens by making services more effective and efficient. A key goal of E-government is to put individuals, families and communities at the centre of networks of knowledge, services and accountability.

In line with the role of ICTs, the African Conference of Ministers agreed to the establishment of an UNPAN portal by the Office of the Chairperson. The portal was established to support the development of efficient public administration systems and competency in public services across the globe. The online services include training materials, information on public administration, information on conferences and other events and directories of public administration and finance.

In providing a historical overview of the portal, it was noted that there is significant participation from African countries and African partner organisations. Information on visitors to the portal reveals that the demand for information on African public administration is very high. In highlighting the benefits of UNPAN, the appeal was that member states focus attention on popularising the portal and provide information through African partners on
their own experiences. In this respect, it is sensible to identify contact persons for the provision of country information to UNPAN partners.

Yet another initiative undertaken by the Pan-African Ministers’ Conference over the course of the past decade and a half was the establishment of the African Development Institute Network (AM DIN). AMDIN focused on the delivery of the second training intervention for MDIs, which is supported by JICA.

Finally, the African Conference of Ministers of Public/Civil Service has placed emphasis on the need to engage Africa’s development partners to support the African Agenda. Since the lunch of the G8-Africa Action Plan in Canada, in 2002 under the auspices of NEPAD, the continent’s external partners have become involved in public sector interventions long African priority lines. Africa was determined to engage the G8 on the basis of mutual accountability and mutual responsibility, meaning that African states and their highly industrialised partners have responsibilities to help realise the goals of the G8-Africa Action Plan.

For Africa, it is important that the G8 and other industrialised powers marshal resources and expertise in support of African development. African ministers came out in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted at the UN Summit in September 2000. The MDGs were also endorsed by the 2002 World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. Both the MDGs and the WSSD focus on halving poverty and improving the welfare of the world’s poorest by 2015 through a global partnership for development. Both compacts also make commitment in the areas of peace, security, human rights, democracy, good governance and development.

African governments have made commitments in the areas of greater accountability and democratic governance; African states and inter-state institutions harbour clear expectations from overseas development partners. First, donors must live up to commitments to provide more aid to Africa – as part of the Monterrey pledges. Second, they must do more to provide better
aid – through harmonised procedures, general budget support and predictable disbursements. Third, they have to do more to ensure that their policies for aid, trade and debt relief are consistent with African efforts to come closer to reaching the MDGs. Fourth, they need to work with African governments in systematically tracking actions to enhance development outcomes – through mechanisms for mutual review.
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