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# SEMINAR COMMUNIQUE

## SOUTHERN AFRICA CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE SPAT FOR REPORTING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

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### INTRODUCTION

1. A joint African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUCPAP&S) and African Management Development Institute Network (AMDIN) Capacity Building Seminar on the use of the State Parties Assessment Tool (SPAT) for reporting on the implementation of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration (the African Charter) was held in Maseru, in the Kingdom of Lesotho on 18 -20 October 2021. The Seminar is one of the series of Capacity Building initiatives the Conference of State Parties (COSPs) on the Africa Charter has mandated the African Union Commission to facilitate for State Parties to understand and achieve the required competencies in the reporting of the implementation of the Charter.
2. Under Article 24.1 (Chapter VI) of the Charter, State Parties are obligated to provide biennial reports to the AUC on the legislative or other relevant measures taken with a view to giving effect to the principles and commitments of the Charter. The Reporting Guidelines for the implementation of the Charter were adopted at the Third Ordinary Session of the Special Technical Committee No 8 (STC 8) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which led to the development of the State Party Assessment Tool (SPAT) that was adopted at the Second Conference of State Parties in April 2021. The Second Conference of State Parties decided that five countries, namely Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, Namibia and Cameroon should be invited to pilot the operationalization of the SPAT. [1]  
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## OFFICIAL OPENING

3. In his opening remarks, the Minister for Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Hon. Keketso Sello reflected that recipients of Public Services are dissatisfied and have lost confidence in the public agencies due to poor quality of services extended to them, manifested by long queues and lack of professionalism in the delivery of such services. The Minister however expressed the view that the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service shall play a pivotal role in strengthening the capacity and capability of the Public Service for improved service delivery.
4. This can be achieved through *inter alia* the introduction of modern and innovative procedures and systems for the delivery of public services as expounded under Article 8 of the Charter, use of modern technologies to support delivery of such services and the Code of Conduct which emphasizes professionalism in the execution of duties by Public Officers. The Minister wished participants a joyous stay here in Maseru-Lesotho and productive discussions, and hoped that the seminar will add to the existing wealth of knowledge to bring about a desired change.
5. Mr Issaka Garba Abdou, Head (Ag) Governance and Human Rights division on behalf of his Excellency Amb Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security rendered his opening remarks. Mr Abdou enlightened that the Charter serves as a roadmap for standard setting for quality public service delivery. Its tenets provide for principles, duties of the public service, code of conduct for public service agents, rights of public service agents, management of human resources, member states' responsibilities toward service delivery as well as mechanisms for implementation of the Charter.
6. Mr Abdou added that like any other binding legal instrument, the effectiveness of the Charter lies in its holistic implementation and translation of its provisions by member States to ensure quality, efficient and corruption-free public service delivery. He explained that the seminar is part of the implementation of the declaration of the COSPs II with the specific objective of bringing together representatives from MDIs and State Parties from the Southern African region to familiarise with the provisions of the Charter and tools for effective reporting on its implementation. He then wished participants a fruitful learning experience.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR**

7. The main objective of the capacity building program was to provide participants from State parties with an in-depth appreciation and understanding of the Charter, the Reporting Guidelines for the Charter and the SPAT as a mechanism for effective reporting on the implementation of the Charter. In addition, the Seminar was envisaged to improve the participant's report writing skills through provision of tips and hints on producing meaningful, good quality, concise and coherent reports.
8. Other objectives are:
  - a) Acquaint participants with the provisions of the Charter and tools for effective reporting on its implementation;
  - b) Make participants understand when and how to conduct a state party assessment and the requirements for ensuring objective and impartial assessments;
  - c) Train participants on the use of the SPAT framework for assessing implementation performance and the detailed mechanics and technicalities of its administration;
  - d) For participants to understand how to summarize findings and conclusions into a factual, good quality and coherent implementation assessment report that meets the requirements of the AU Commission and;
  - e) For participants to comprehend the process of report submission, validation of findings and any further actions

## **PRESENTATIONS AND KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED**

9. The opening presentation set the tone of the seminar in elucidating that the African Charter is essentially a compendium of a value system that seeks to inform administrative reforms in Africa. The Charter anticipates to support AU member states as they are committed to embark on initiatives directed at improving state capacity. In addition to providing for the development of guidelines for domestication, the Charter obligates the African Union to mobilise resources to support and establish required mechanisms for the implementation of the Charter. Finally, the Charter would empower the African public service to progressively move toward becoming a people-oriented public service and consequently,

play a significant role in inculcating a culture of good governance for better development outcomes.

10. The Guidelines for Reporting on the Implementation of the Charter and the SPAT was presented and explained. The purposes of the reporting guidelines is to afford a framework for State Parties to prepare and submit reports as envisaged under Article 24. The guidelines outline a structure, scope and methodology for preparation, submission, review and follow up of implementation of the Charter at the national level. The guidelines, in the main, ensure relevance, consistency and uniformity of data collected from diverse countries and jurisdictions.
11. In the plenary interventions participants acknowledged that ethics and professionalism are central pillars of a functional public service. It was recognised that even though the Charter has provisions for enhancing service delivery, the reality in most member states was different. It is therefore important for member states to strive to make the vision of the African Charter a reality for the African people.
12. The presentation on the State Party Assessment Tool (SPAT) covered the background, context, rationale, purposes, structure and administration of the SPAT. It was explained that the SPAT was developed following a resolution by State Parties to a capacity building workshop on reporting guidelines held in Dar Es Salaam in May 2019. The SPAT is designed to simplify the reporting process and lead to the production of more useful and results-oriented reports. The SPAT has four components which are the user guide, the spreadsheet, the assessment and the reporting processes. It was further explained that the administration of the SPAT has four main stages which are training and sensitization; initial or independent self-assessment and report; facilitated self-assessment; and the final state party report to the relevant AU organs.
13. The facilitator guided the participants through the structure and content of the SPAT and thereafter invited them to a trial use of the tool in a group exercise. Participants inquired whether the SPAT design could be further strengthened to prevent accidental data entry wherefore it was proposed that further information technology intervention could enhance the SPAT security measures. Participants also expressed the view that the tool seemed to focus on availability of documents and not on implementation. It was clarified that the

tool is meant to be administered by a multi-stakeholder platform and hence there would be opportunity to debate and discuss the scoring so that it was accurate and based on empirical data.

14. Participants proposed that ratification of and accountability on the charter is important and need to be looked at during domestication as well there is also a need to appoint champions in each country to ensure that the charter processes are effectively implemented and internalised. Participants learned that the South African National School of Government (NSG) has a short course on anti-corruption and ethics management in the public service designed to assist public servants to gain deeper knowledge on issues of ethics and professionalism.
15. It was acknowledged that MDIs have an important role to play in deepening the understanding for better implementation of the Charter. The African Union suggested that a meeting take place with various MDIs to explore ways and approaches to incorporate training on the African Charter in their curriculum. Lesotho indicated that it would approach the South African NSG to benchmark on how to develop a course on Customer care. Lack of consequence management was singled out as the most important challenge for the African public service. Participants welcomed the commitment from Lesotho to commence processes and measures of accession to the African Charter.

## **SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS**

16. The Seminar recommended that:
  - a) State Parties should strive to implement the Charter and deploy the SPAT to report on the implementation.
  - b) It is important to translate the Charter into local languages for ease of understanding and internalization of the values therein
  - c) Lesotho should strive to accede to the Charter and ascent to the status of a State Party
  - d) The MDIs should explore means to develop a suitable curriculum tailored on deepening the understanding of the Charter and the use of the SPAT for reporting on implementation.
  - e) The African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security and AMDIN will discuss a modality of collaboration to incorporate the MDIs into the Regional Capacity Training programmes for State Parties on the implementation and reporting on the African Charter.
  - f) The AUC should engage its internal information technology experts to enhance the functionality and security features of the SPAT

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

17. Hon. Minister Sello conveyed gratitude to the EU for funding the seminar and the AUC for the facilitation role. The Minister also expressed gratitude to all the States Parties and MDI's of the Southern Region for making time to attend the training Seminar. He also appreciated the role played by AMDIN in collaboration with the Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) in organising the Seminar.
18. On his part, the AUC representative Mr Issaka Abdou expressed sincere gratitude to the Government and peoples of Lesotho for the exceptional hosting of the Seminar in record time as well as for the hospitality extended to all participants. Mr Abdou also thanked the AMDIN and the European Union for their generosity in providing financial and technical support to facilitate the convening of this seminar.

## Closing Ceremony

19. The AMDIN Vice President thanked participants for the fruitful deliberations and the opportunity for continuous learning and equally so, for all public servants who will benefit from this milestone. She reminded participants that they are now tasked with ensuring execution guided by Agenda 2063, which is to promote and drive good governance on the continent through transformation of Africa's public administrations, for improved performance and service delivery. She underscored AMDIN's undertaking to provide thought leadership through the drive of behavioural and social change communications using the vehicle of MDIs. She concluded by thanking the EU for funding the seminar and the African Union Commission for the facilitation role. In the same vein, she thanked all representatives of the States Parties for their participation.
20. In his closing remarks Mr Issaka Abdou of the African Union Commission expressed his satisfaction that the objectives set for the Capacity Building Seminar had been met. Through participant's diligence and commitment, he noted the Seminar has raised important recommendations that are relevant, realistic and achievable. He praised participants for the robust engagement that featured fascinating debates in the working groups. Mr Abdou said he is convinced that the participants of the Joint AUC-AMDIN southern Africa region Seminar are now better informed about the importance and timeliness of the mission ahead. On behalf of H.E. the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Mr Abdou expressed his contentment and at the same time encouraged everyone to implement the recommendations adopted during this Seminar so that they can serve as a model for other regions of our continent.
21. Ms Nthabiseng Thlomola, the Director General, Department of Public Service in Lesotho thanked participants for their patience and discipline throughout the three day of the Seminar. It was a singular privilege, she said, for Lesotho to host the Seminar. She on behalf of Minister Sello wished participants safe trip to their respective destinations.

## ATTENDANCE AT THE SEMINAR

22. The following participants attended the seminar

1	South Africa	Mamphoke Mohlala	National School of Government
2	Mozambique	Carlos Shenga	Assistant professor
3	South Africa	Lekau Boshomane	Quality Assurance & Accreditation Management specialist
4	Swatini	Desire Murwira	Senior Lecturer
5	Malawi	Humfrey Mndaka	Head of Local Government Department
6	Botswana	Bridget Leshupi	Principal Trainer
7	Namibia	Jona Nakashona	Head of Local Government Department
8	Namibia	Maria nangolo	Executive director
9	Zambia	Samuel Sakala	Director management studies
10	Lesotho	Mapule Mohlotsane	Trainer
11	Lesotho	Mathabo Makiti	Trainer
12	Lesotho	Moliehi Lebusa	Trainer
13	Lesotho	Paseka Mohobo	trainer
14	Lesotho	Mapoulo Maseela	Director training
15	Lesotho	Malintle Lekhanya	Director performance
16	Lesotho	Mamolise Phakisis	Director Academic
17	Lesotho	Khakhane Mokhena	Chief legal officer
18	AUC	Kevin Tchacho	Convenor
19	AUC	Issaka Abdul	Convenor
20	United Kingdom	Dr Dennys Pasipanodya	Facilitator
21	South African	Mataywa Busieka (PhD)	Facilitator