

38th Capacity Development Roundtable Conference on
“A Transformed Leadership: Managing National Resources to achieve the Objectives of
Africa Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals”
Al-Jadida, Morocco
6-10 November 2017

AIDE-MEMOIRE

“Developing transformational leadership and innovation capacities in Africa’s public-sector institutions to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs”



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DIVISION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND

The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) is partnering with the Government of Morocco and the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) to organize the 38th Capacity Development Roundtable Conference on “A Transformed Leadership: Managing National Resources to achieve the Objectives of Africa Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals”. It will take place in El Jadida, Morocco from 6th to 10th November 2017. The main objective of the 38th Roundtable Conference is to facilitate a conversation that will lead to the proposal of a basket of measures on effective management of national resources and efficient deployment of Africa’s diverse assets as set and envisioned in Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within the framework of this Conference, the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs will organize a plenary round-table on “Developing transformational leadership capacities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs”. The second plenary round-table will be on “Promoting innovation in Africa’s public-sector institutions for implementing the 2030 Agenda to achieve SDGs”. In addition, DPADM will also organize two parallel breakaway workshops. The first break away workshop will focus on “Developing competences for the future to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs”. The second one will focus on one of the curriculums that would need to be reviewed in light of the SDGs, namely “Developing transformative leadership in Africa’s public sector institutions: integrating the SDGs in the curricula of the Management Development Institutes”.

These activities are intended to contribute to member states' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda by making institutions effective, inclusive and accountable; building public administrations capacities; and inspiring leadership and innovation in the public service in Africa.

CONTEXT

Overall context:

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all Heads of State and Government in September 2015 is an ambitious roadmap for people, planet and prosperity. It has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 163 targets at its heart. The SDGs address the MDGs, but lift the level of ambition.

Implementation of the SDGs will require mobilizing public servants and building their capacities. Public servants need to be able to support policy making in a range of areas that have proved difficult to address. They need to learn how to elaborate, implement and review integrated policies. Planning skills and envisioning risks and scenarios becomes critical. Civil servants must also develop skills to “leave no one behind”, a core principle of the 2030 Agenda. They need to engage vulnerable groups in decision-making and service delivery and oversight. Critically, they must bolster their skills and values related to making institutions inclusive, effective and accountable, as committed in SDG 16.

Public servants also need to mobilize resources and build effective public-people-private partnerships to support the SDGs. Public servants must also develop skills in fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination processes on topics related to the SDGs and their inter-linkages. Empowering grass-roots organizations and closely working together with local communities, including women, can help to promote buy-in of national policies and provide greater incentives to pursue sustainable development. Improving digital skills, access to infrastructure and Internet connection will also be essential to close the digital divide in Africa. As one example, skills in using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping natural resources and other technologies will be needed in managing resources effectively.

AAPAM theme:

World leaders have pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of current and future generations.” Development for all can only be achieved if economic growth and social development go hand in hand with environmental protection, giving full priority to sustainability. For this to happen, countries need to adopt integrated policies balancing long-term economic growth ensuring that no one is left behind and that natural resources are conserved for future generations. Africa has recognised the need for a transformed leadership that can spearhead policies, strategies and implementation of the 2030 Agenda to achieve SDGs.

Natural resources are fundamental for improving livelihoods and achieving sustainable development in Africa. The African continent has abundant natural resources (such as water, diamonds, mines, forestry, and fisheries) and non-renewable resources (minerals, coal, gas, and oil). These “are the basis of income and subsistence for large segments of Africa’s population and constitute a principal source of public revenue and national wealth”¹. Eradicating poverty

¹ See: <https://nepadbusinessfoundation.org/index.php/thematic-areas/climate-change-and-natural-resource-management>

in all of its forms will depend on equitable access to natural resources, including water. Climate change and a deteriorating environment are a key challenge to sustainability, bio-diversity, food security and stability across Africa. Pollution, deteriorating soil quality, desertification and poor air quality are threatening the lives and futures of all of the continent's people"². Access to, and ownership of these resources, can also be a major cause of conflict, which could be further exacerbated if resources are not managed in a sustainable way. It fosters corruption on a large scale in some countries.

"Within the continuing dialogue of transforming Africa's public administration and management, it becomes necessary to look at the nexus between transformed leadership and the management of national resources. In an environment characterized by uncertainty and unpredictability as a result of constant technological, social, political and economic changes, African countries thus find themselves in dynamic contexts, which demand constant adaptation (see Mayer et al 2014). The effects of the global financial crisis are still smouldering and important lessons have been learned, more specifically how to prudently manage national resources. This scenario calls for transformed leadership to guide Africa through rapid changes..."³.

Enhanced leadership capacities in Africa are critical to build a sustainable and effective natural resource management system for the needs of today and tomorrow. Realizing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring that natural resources are sustainably managed will depend on the political will of government leaders and public servants' and their capabilities. As highlighted in the Report of the Secretary-General on *Human resources development for the twenty-first century*, "the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require policy integration at all levels, supported by effective institutions and adequately skilled human resources. Human resources development as part of the national sustainable development strategies should be informed by multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure policy integration and coordination. Although some countries have begun this process, too few have prioritized the emerging core skills needed in national sustainable development strategies".

Without a dedicated effort to help governments mobilize and build the capacity of public servants at all levels, progress on the SDGs may be undermined by ineffective practices. For the SDGs to be realized, public servants need to understand what they aim to achieve and how the SDGs relate to their country's situation. Realizing the SDGs requires African governments to invest in human resource development, including transformational leadership and strategic thinking and planning to ensure that inter-linkages and trade-offs underlying the SDGs are properly addressed. Public servants also need to envisage various policy scenarios, adopt medium and long-term policy horizons, and have the capacity to design, implement and monitor integrated policies. Skills in data collection and statistical capacity, risk management, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes for conservation and management of natural resources are also critical to advancing the 2030 Agenda. Public servants must also develop adequate skills to work across different government departments and with other state institutions, raising public awareness and involving civil society and other stakeholders. Public servants will need to develop new attitudes, skills, and behaviours to engage people in the localization of the SDGs. All these demands apply to leadership related to the managing natural resources.

² See: <https://nepadbusinessfoundation.org/index.php/thematic-areas/climate-change-and-natural-resource-management>

³ <http://www.aapam.org/conferences-and-events/upcoming-events>

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the capacity development activities organized by UN DESA/DPADM within the framework of the 38th Capacity Development Roundtable Conference is to support African countries in their efforts to strengthen public sector capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda. The objectives of the various activities organized are summarized here below.

The activities convened by DESA during the AAPAM meeting intend to reflect on the wealth of new capacities public servants need to have to support progress towards the SDGs. They aim to kickstart a process with public administration associations and schools in Africa to develop and adjust curriculums so that schools and institutes teach the SDGs and ensure that their various curriculums reflect the goals and the key principles of the 2030 Agenda. Leadership curriculum will be discussed as one example of a curriculum that would need to be updated in light of the SDGs. Due consideration will be given to the multiple linkages and common vision of Agenda 2063.

Plenary Round-Table on “Developing transformational leadership capacities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs”

The objective of the plenary round-table on “Developing transformational leadership capacities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs” is to look at the role of leadership at national and local government levels in realizing the 2030 Agenda. Panellists will examine what an integral and transformational development agenda and leaving no one behind entail in terms of leadership capacities and skills. Insights and lessons learned from country experiences will also be shared. This will include a reflection on how to transform mind-sets among public servants to implement desired changes in support of the SDGs.

Plenary round-table on “Promoting innovation in Africa’s public-sector institutions for implementing the 2030 Agenda to achieve SDGs”.

The purpose of the second plenary roundtable is to introduce the theme of innovation in the public service. It will be an occasion for government officials to discuss trends and lessons learned on innovation in the African public service for SDGs implementation. Past UN Public Service Award (UNPSA) winners will be invited to reflect on their winning initiatives and distil lessons learned on innovation in the public sector to advance the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. As is well known, the 2030 Agenda is a transformational agenda. Business as usual will not help in the implementation of the SDGs. Innovation, creativity and thinking will instead be instrumental to addressing complex challenges, such as poverty eradication and climate change. The plenary round-table will therefore provide a platform for government officials to learn from the good practices and experiences of selected UN Public Service Award (UNPSA) winners in Africa. It will help to identify the key capacities needed to innovate and transform public administration to realize Agenda 2030. Participants will also discuss and reflect on the new approaches and possible methodologies to develop the leadership capacities that are needed to innovate in public service delivery. Lessons learned and key recommendations will be incorporated in the training course on transformational leadership.

UNDESA will join AAPAM in a third plenary round-table on “National resource management” in line with the objectives of Africa Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Break Away Workshop on “Developing competences for the future to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs”

The workshop on “Developing competences for the future to implement the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development and the SDGs” will focus on developing a curriculum on “Realizing the SDGs by 2030 as well as on the review/elaboration of other curricula related to the SDGs. The presentations and discussions of competences will, among other things, highlight the implications of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs on the public servants. The workshop will benefit from the experience of the francophone schools of public administration in this region who conducted a process to develop a curriculum on the SDGs. The meeting will discuss a framework for the development of a curriculum for public servants on the SDGs and for identifying other curricula that should be updated or elaborated will be discussed during the meeting. The ideas and key points of the curriculum on the SDGs and identification of other related curricula will be discussed between management development institutes and human resource managers and managers from sectoral ministries in the public sector. Furthermore, a group of Management Development Institutes (MDIs) in Africa who have been working with ENA Canada on this will make a presentation and engage in discussion with the rest of the MDIs and human resource managers present. The workshops’ findings will be presented during the plenary session of the last day.

Break Away Workshop on “Developing transformative leadership in Africa’s public-sector institutions: integrating the SDGs in the curricula of the Management Development Institutes”.

As one example of the kind of curriculum that should be adjusted to reflect the SDGs, the second workshop will discuss framework for a curriculum and training course on leadership capacities, reflecting the principles of Agenda 2030. The discussion will engage the Management Development Institutes, human resource managers in public sector institutions and the rest of the public service leadership during the event. Within this context, DESA will facilitate the discussion on how to develop transformational leadership capacities in Africa and reflect on their role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs. The curriculum will help governments to develop new leadership capacities to attain the SDGs.

The workshops will adopt a participatory approach. They will start with brief introductory presentations leading to group work and discussions. The key findings will be summarized and presented during the closing plenary session.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The event is expected to achieve the following goals:

- Enhanced capacities of public servants in Africa to implement the 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda and enhanced leadership and innovation capacities.
- Enhanced capacity of public servants in Africa to engage in south-south cooperation among African countries and other developing countries.

Based on the findings and material collected during the Conference, DPADM will support a process among the MDIs in Africa to develop a curriculum and an online training respectively on (i) the SDGs and their implications for policies and capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda and (ii) leadership capacities and competencies to implement the SDGs. The ideas and key points of the curriculum on the SDGs will be discussed between the management development institutes and human resource managers in the public sector so that the IPAs get a sense of the expectations of human resource managers regarding public servants’ training. Based on the expressed needs of the MDIs, a list of possible areas to design further components of the curriculum will be discussed during the meeting.

During the workshop, a task force to work on the curriculum on SDGs will be established and it will include representatives from five to six countries in Africa. Through this task force, the MDIs that took part in DPADM's capacity development activities during the Conference will be engaged in a process of further revision and finalization of the curricula through follow-up meetings and use of electronic means. The curriculum could be completed after six months and could be launched during the 2018 UN Public Service Forum, which will take place in Morocco in June 2018. A training course on transformational leadership for SDG implementation will also be further developed.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants who will attend UNDESA's plenary round-tables and break away workshops include the following:

- Senior public servants from all ministries including sectoral ministries in areas such as education, health, agriculture and others
- Government officials from six African countries that won the UN Public Service Awards
- Human resource managers in the public sector
- Representatives of Management Development Institutions (MDI), especially those involved in capacity building
- Public servants at all levels in Africa.

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