Economic Commission for Africa

Public Sector Management Reforms in Africa

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

During the last two decades, most African countries have embarked on comprehensive public sector reform programmes, and in many cases have received assistance from international institutions. However, despite the tremendous efforts and resources that have been allocated to this endeavour, progress remains scant.

Public sector management reforms are a central feature of economic policy reform programmes. However, the performance of such reforms in Africa remains hindered by a myriad of factors including lack of efficiency, lack of accountability, ineffective management practices, and corruption. In response to the need to promote better public sector performance, the Development Policy Management Division (DPMD) of ECA held an Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting (AEGM) on Public Sector Management Reforms in Africa from 28 to 29 May 2003.

The purpose of the meeting was to bring together officials and experts from public service institutions and knowledge networks to review the status of public sector reforms being undertaken, and to identify successful experiences, and best practices in African public sector management reforms. The main aim was to finalize a paper on public sector management reforms in Africa, based on the recommendations and contributions made at the AEGM. This paper is the final product of those deliberations.

The intent is for this paper to serve as an advisory tool for the governments of member States that are undertaking public sector reform initiatives. Best practices are identified, and recommendations are provided. However, it is clear that not all of the methods and tools outlined will be applicable to all countries. Therefore, a careful and selective adaptation of some elements to selected areas is essential. In that regard, it is also important to note that public sector management is concerned with a continuous improvement in all aspects of government work. It aims to continuously improve results by improving capacity.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most of the public sector reform programmes that have taken place in developing countries during the last two decades were introduced as part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the World Bank in the 1980s. However, most of the more recent reforms, under the influence of the New Public Management (NPM), have been driven by a combination of economic, social, political and technological factors, which have triggered the quest for efficiency and for ways to cut the cost of delivering public services. Additional factors, particularly for Africa, include lending conditionalities and the increasing emphasis on good governance.

The core paradigm which can be discerned as influential in the development of public sector reforms in the 1980s and 1990s was that public sector provision was inefficient and often ineffective; that it led neither to cost containment nor to quality improvement. With the problems so defined, the paradigm extended to a belief that the public and private sectors did not have to be organized and managed in fundamentally different ways. Indeed that it would be better for the public services if they could be organized and managed as much like the private sector as possible. The focus of the NPM movement therefore, was on creating institutional and organizational contexts which are to mirror what is seen as critical aspects of private sector modes of organizing and managing. Public sector reforms taking place in Africa today build on previous programmes. However, they also fundamentally question the role and institutional character of the State.

This study presents experiences of African countries in their efforts at public sector reforms, and assesses the extent to which African countries have taken up NPM reforms. The aim is to show how such experiences can help African countries improve the content and approach to public sector reforms. The paper will show that, so far, public sector management reform efforts in the region have produced mixed results. Efforts have been made to increase efficiency through decentralization and privatization. Accountability measures, such as performance-based contracts, Citizens' Charters and Public Reporting are also being introduced on a selective basis. These reforms are being applied, but not in a very comprehensive and consistent manner.

Public sector management reforms in Africa face a number of challenges that have limited the scope, speed and quality of services rendered. For example,

corruption constitutes by far one of the biggest challenges in the public sector. Other challenges include multiple accountability, inadequate resource utilization and institutional capacity. African governments, therefore, need to increase their efforts to address these challenges through effective public sector reforms. However, reformers also need to keep an open mind as to what may work and what may not, and be guided by the needs of the situation. While the new public management approach may not be a panacea for the problems of the public sector in Africa, a careful and selective adaptation of some elements to selected sectors may be beneficial.

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, developed and developing countries have been embarking on public- sector management reforms. The role and institutional character of the State has been questioned, and the public sector has been under pressure to adopt private sector orientations. The earlier reforms aimed at shaping a public administration that could lead national development, and was based on the same institutional peculiarities inherited from the colonial period. More recently, the World Bank and other donors in Africa have been concerned with finding alternative ways of organizing and managing the public services and redefining the role of the State to give more prominence to markets and competition, and to the private and voluntary sectors. The alternative vision, based on issues of efficiency, representation, participation and accountability, has sought to create a market-friendly, liberalized, lean, decentralized, customer-oriented, managerial and democratic State.

The public service (ministries, parastatals and extra-ministerial departments) has always been the tool available to African governments for the implementation of developmental goals and objectives. It is seen as a pivot for growth of African economies. It is responsible for the creation of an appropriate and conducive environment in which all sectors of the economy can perform optimally, and it is this catalytic role of the public service that propelled governments all over the world to search continuously for better ways to deliver their services.

However, the African State is said to be over-extended to the point that reductions, refocusing and reengineering of its activities are needed. Moreover, stronger incentives for performance need to be put in place to improve macro-economic stability as well as efficiency. Many of these initiatives are inspired by NPM concepts, the central feature of which is to introduce or simulate, within those sections of the public service that are not privatized, the performance incentives and the disciplines that exist in a market environment. The campaign for civil society forms part of a wider bundle of reforms in the public sector for the introduction of market-oriented public management methods.

Many African countries such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritius, Senegal and Uganda, have embarked on comprehensive reforms aimed at improving the quality of life of their citizens, and creating new government machineries to establish efficient and effective management systems. However, despite the tremendous efforts and resources allocated to reforms, little progress has been made, and many African

countries have not come close to their goal of developing and transforming their societies to the same standards as developed countries. Effective health services, education and housing still remain out of reach for many communities. With a few exceptions of successful cases (Botswana, for example), public service management remains at a lethargic stage.

Against this background, the need arises for African countries to learn from each other's experiences in terms of efforts at public sector management reforms. ECA, in its capacity as a regional advocacy body, seeks to assist African countries in this respect through conducting comparative studies on reform experiences and providing relevant information on best practices, challenges and strategies for improving public sector management performance.

This paper provides an overview of public sector management reforms in Africa. It is an in-depth research study on the experiences of African countries and illustrates how such experiences can help African countries to improve public sector performance and enhance the effectiveness of the delivery of services. The paper is divided into seven chapters, following this introduction. Chapter 1 provides a political and economic context to public sector reforms in Africa. Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual framework and highlights the relationship between good governance and public sector management reforms. An analysis of the New Public Management (NPM) is also provided in this section. Chapter 3 outlines the various intra- and inter-organizational mechanisms for public sector management reform including decentralization, privatization, performance management, and pay reform. Chapter 4 provides selected applications of NPM in Africa, and highlights best practices. Challenges to public sector reforms in Africa are discussed in chapter 5 and strategies for improved public sector management reforms are provided in chapter 6. Chapter 7 contains conclusions and recommendations.

1. THE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

1.1   Major Political Changes in Africa

Following their independence in the early 1960s, most African countries supported the idea of a strong central government to secure social justice for all citizens. But instead of a democratic regime with independence among state institutions, highly centralized and omnipotent States emerged. The new regimes and central governments were considered as facilitators of wealth distribution, whereas the people's sense of duty, responsibility and identity remained centred on local links, ethnic groups, the village and family.

Politically, the one-party system was portrayed as an embodiment of the people's will and a way of uniting the new nation. One-party systems exercised all the powers of national sovereignty, and constitutions were revised to give the single parties and their leaders absolute power over the government, the legislature and the judiciary. This symbolized the end of the embryonic State and the beginning of the party State.

The marginalization of certain sectors of the population for various reasons, including ethnic and religious, obliged many national armies or civil groups to seize power by force. Since 1963, when the first military coup took place in Africa, the continent has found itself in an incessant cycle of political, social and ethnic conflict. Most of the military regimes adopted new constitutions in order to guarantee freedom and human rights to all citizens. However, history repeats itself and soon after, it was realized that the political and socio-economic conditions of Africa under the reform had not improved.

In the 1990s, domestic and external forces started to exert considerable pressure on African governments to liberalize the political space. Consequently, democratic systems were introduced, which embarked upon ambitious programmes of political, institutional and economic reforms. The objectives of those reforms involved changing the role of government, creating an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to flourish, and establishing an effective civil service by increasing its competence, efficiency, fairness and quality of services. Tremendous progress has been made, although in many African countries, the situation has remained the same or has worsened, due to a combination of internal and external factors. For the most part, governance in Africa has been marked by authoritarianism and state privatization for the benefit of the ruling elite, resulting in institutional disintegration rather than development.

1.2 Major Socio-economic Policies and Programmes since the 1980s

The 1980s, in particular, was considered a 'lost decade' for Africa owing to the multiple crises experienced within the region. The combination of the rise in oil prices and the fall in the prices of primary products had a devastating effect on the performance of African economies. This was due to the region's dependence on a limited number of primary products. Other factors that contributed to the crisis in the 1980s included the burden of growing external debt, rapid population increases, continuous drought accompanied by desertification, and devastating internal conflicts.

The structural adjustment reforms initiated in the mid-1980s with the support and leadership of the Bretton Woods institutions introduced a new public-administration paradigm and macroeconomic policy framework. These reforms sought to reduce the role of the State in production as well as service delivery and encourage the deregulation of public enterprises. The emphasis was on maintaining macro economic stability, lowering inflation, cutting deficit spending, and reducing the scope and cost of government. The reforms related to the functioning and role of the state in the economic sphere have, in many instances, produced positive results. The privatization of public enterprises producing goods and services has reduced the role of the state in areas where the private sector has often proved to be a better alternative. However, notwithstanding the positive results derived from these reforms, the retreat of the State in social areas (health, education and housing) was detrimental for many African countries.

The lessons of experience have shown some limitations of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s, and have pointed to the need to broaden the agenda of public sector reforms. It is now being acknowledged that States with weak institutions are not well prepared to face the adjustment costs of globalization. Without complementarities between domestic strategies for institutional reform and strategies for opening up to global market forces, African countries risk exposing themselves to the kinds of protracted crises from which some have just begun to recover.

Globalization requires reinforcing state capacity. Opening up the economy brings costs and benefits. The more effective a state, the more it can focus on compensating losses caused by globalization and technical change. The absence of an effective public administration can often constrain States from participating in the global economy. It is now recognized that the reform of the public services will give them a better opportunity to benefit from globalization.

A number of programmes have been adopted since the 1980s in an effort to establish the foundations for structural transformation and integration of African

countries into the global economy. In 1980, African leaders adopted the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa. The Plan was designed to restructure the economy, based on the twin principles of national and collective self-reliance and self-sustaining development. In 1985, the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) was adopted. This programme set out measures for reducing the external debt burden and preparing a common platform for action at subregional, regional and international levels. The United Nations Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) was adopted by the United Nations at its thirteenth session. The programme covered the period 1986-1990, and aimed at establishing the foundations for structural transformation, increased productivity and general improvement of African economies.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF) was adopted in 1991. This programme was aimed mainly at the transformation, integration and diversification of African economies so as to strengthen them as partners in world trade and to reduce their vulnerability to external shocks. Also, recognizing that greater access to world markets would allow Africa to exploit their comparative advantage while opening up to international competition, African States participated in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations in Morocco in 1994.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was adopted in 2000. The Declaration embodies goals aimed at improving livelihoods. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) consist of a number of targets including the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and the development of a global partnership for development. The priorities outlined in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - the latest in the series of development frameworks for Africa - include good governance, economic growth, mobilization of resources, global partnerships, environmental protection, poverty reduction, and investment in human resources.

As stated above, many efforts have been made since the early 1980s to gear Africa towards a path of sustainable development and economic growth. However, annual economic growth for the decade of the 1990s averaged only 2.1 per cent, considerably less than the internationally agreed target of 7 per cent growth needed to reduce the number of Africans living below the poverty line by 2015. Although NEPAD and the MDGs are at the very beginning of their implementation, the attainment of these objectives becomes questionable unless drastic and concrete decisions are taken at national, sub regional, regional, and international levels to pave the way towards sustainable development and economic growth.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Good Governance and Public-Sector Management Reforms

From the late 1980s, the debate on good governance and its requirements has provided an impetus for new approaches to public sector management reforms. Some of the changes that have taken place have been aimed at tackling some of the worst forms of governance abuses and failures in Africa: the personalized nature of rule in which key political actors exercise unlimited power; systemic clientelism; misuse of State resources and institutionalized corruption; opaque government; the breakdown of the public realm; the lack of delegation of power and the withdrawal of the masses from governance (Hyden, 1992 and 2000, Bratton & van de Walle, 1992).

Good public management and administration, with emphasis on accountability and responsiveness to customer needs, has been seen as an aspect of good governance by donor agencies supporting reforms in developing countries. To the World Bank, good governance consists of a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to the public. The World Bank elaborates on four elements of good governance (World Bank, 1989, 1992):

- Public sector management emphasizing the need for effective financial and human resource management through improved budgeting, accounting and reporting, and rooting out inefficiency particularly in public enterprises;
- Accountability in public services, including effective accounting, auditing and decentralization, and generally making public officials responsible for their actions and responsive to consumers;
- A predictable legal framework with rules known in advance; a reliable and independent judiciary and law enforcement mechanisms; and
- Availability of information and transparency in order to enhance policy analysis, promote public debate and reduce the risk of corruption.

It is apparent from the above conception of "good governance" that there is some emphasis on improving public-sector management systems. Thus, in the good governance prescriptions, one finds public management reforms as a key component pointing towards market and private sector approaches to public sector management, under the guise of New Public Management (NPM).

2.2   New Public Management

New Public Management (NPM) is a label used to describe a management culture that emphasizes the centrality of the citizen or customer, as well as accountability for results. It is a set of broadly similar administrative doctrines, which dominated the public administration reform agenda of most OECD countries from the late 1970s (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 1993; Ridley, 1996). It captures most of the structural, organizational and managerial changes taking place in the public services of these countries, and a bundle of management approaches and techniques borrowed from the private-for-profit sector.

NPM shifts the emphasis from traditional public administration to public management, pushing the state towards 'managerialism'. The traditional model of organization and delivery of public services, based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning and centralization, direct control and self-sufficiency, is apparently being replaced by a market-based public service management or enterprise culture. NPM has provided for a future of smaller, faster-moving service delivery organizations that would be kept lean by the pressures of competition, and that would need to be user-responsive and outcome-oriented in order to survive. These organizations would be expected to develop flatter internal structures (i.e. fewer layers) and devolve operational authority to front-line managers. With a downsized number of staff, many services would be 'contracted out' instead of assuming that in-house provision is best.

According to Hood (1991), the major NPM doctrines of what must be done are that:

(a) Direct public sector costs should be cut and labour discipline raised so as to improve resource use;

(b) Private-sector-style management practices applied to increase flexibility in decision-making;

(c) Competition in the public sector (through term contracts and tendering) increased, as rivalry is the key to lower costs and better standards;

(d) The public sector disaggregated and decentralized to make units more manageable and to increase competition among them;

(e) Controls shifted from inputs to outputs, to stress results rather than procedure;

(f) Explicit standards and performance measures established, because accountability requires clearly stated aims and efficiency requires attention to goals; and

(g) Managers given powers to conduct hands-on professional management, because accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility, not diffusion of power.

The key components of NPM may be put into two broad strands – those that emphasize managerial improvement and organizational restructuring, and those that emphasize markets and competition. The basic foundation of the NPM movement is the drive for efficiency and the use of the economic market as a model for political and administrative relationships. In addition, the institutional aspects of NPM derive from the "new institutional economics" movement, which has a theoretical foundation in public choice, transaction cost and principal-agent theories. These generated public sector reforms themes are based on ideas of market, competition, contracting, transparency and emphasis on incentive structures as a way of giving more "choice" and "voice" to service users and promoting efficiency in public service delivery.

Improved efficiency is now the overriding aim of public sector reforms in most African countries. It is thought that the State's capability – its ability to promote and undertake collective action efficiently – is overextended. Therefore, reductions and a refocusing of the State's activities are needed to improve macroeconomic stability, as well as the implementation of stronger incentives for performance. Furthermore, increased competition in service provision, both with the private sector and in the public sector itself, is required in order to raise efficiency. Consequently, governments should concentrate their efforts less on direct intervention and more on enabling others to be productive (World Bank, 1989:5) by providing "core" functions such as safeguarding law and order; protecting property rights; managing the macroeconomy to promote and regulate the market; providing basic social services and infrastructure; and protecting the vulnerable and destitute.

Despite the move to reduce the role of the public sector, there is broad agreement about the need to increase the capacity of the State. "Re-engineering" (Hope, 2002) or "invigorating" (Klitgaard, 1997) public institutions is required. To do this, a variety of NPM-inspired measures are used, including the refocusing of public-sector functions through staff reductions and changes in budgetary allocations; restructuring of public organizations through the reorganization of ministries; decentralizing, delinking or 'hiving off' central government functions to local governments or the private sector; emphasis on private sector styles of management practice; marketization and introduction of competition in service provision; explicit standards and measures of performance; greater transparency; pay reform; and emphasis on outputs (Therkildsen, 2001)

Improved accountability in the conduct of public affairs is another reform objective. There is plenty of empirical evidence to show that even in consolidated democratic States in Africa, there are major deficits in accountability. Problems of accountability arise, for example, when:

- Governments ignore or transgress social ethics and constitutional and legal provisions in conducting public affairs;
- Tasks to be performed are so complex or unspecified that implementation is very difficult if not impossible;
- Activities are hidden;
- Corrupt practices are widespread;
- Political and personal loyalty are rewarded more than merit; and
- Public participation in running public affairs is low.

  (Olowu, 1999; Therkilsden, 2001).

Accountability involves both the political justification of decisions and actions, and managerial answerability for implementation of agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance (Day and Klein, 1987). Political accountability is about those with authority being answerable for their actions to the citizens, whether directly or indirectly, and managerial accountability is about making those with delegated authority answerable for carrying out agreed tasks according to agreed criteria of performance. The interest in accountability within public sector reform is a desire to make public sector staff more accountable for their decisions and actions. In more detail, this means that:

- Some set of recipients receive information about the outcomes of decisions made by identified individuals who are source decision-makers;
- Those sources can be made to explain their decisions; and
- Some sanctions can be imposed if the explanations are unsatisfactory.

The various reforms of the 1990s addressed some of the accountability problems discussed above. Among these initiatives were attempts to:

- Strengthen the rule of law and the judiciary;
- Promote democratization and the role of the media;
- "Depoliticize" the public sectors in countries that used to have one-party rule;
- Strengthen anti-corruption measures; and
- Increase internal and external auditing capacity.

These "traditional" measures are still on the reform agenda. However, in the current debate, it is the institutional view that informs most of the actual reform initiatives, and it is NPM concepts that inspire many reform measures as far as accountability is concerned. One concerns the NPM-inspired measure to introduce performance management. However, other instruments have emerged, such as Citizens Charters, and service delivery or user surveys.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS

3.1 Interorganizational Mechanisms

A high level of involvement and participation by ordinary people is conducive to sustainable development. Decentralization, privatization, contracting out and partnerships with civil society, including NGOs, offer important inter-organizational avenues for bringing about or increasing participation, whilst ensuring more effective and efficient public service delivery.

Decentralization

One of the central elements in the changing role of the public sector and the construct of the New Public Administration (NPA) is the concept of decentralization (Hope, 2002). Decentralization can be defined as the transfer of authority or responsibility for decision making, planning, management, or resource allocation from the central government to its field units, district administrative units, local government, regional or functional authorities, semiautonomous public authorities, parastatal organizations, private entities and non-governmental private voluntary organizations (Rondinelli, Nellis, and Cheema 1983; Rondinelli and Cheema 1983).

Highly centralized forms of governance have been blamed for the generation of administrative pathologies including communication overload, response times, filtering and distortion of information, a failure to grasp spatial connections in sectoral programming, and so on. Moreover, centralized states tend to be unresponsive to local needs as well as the needs of the disempowered in particular (Friedmann, 1992). The primary objectives of decentralization therefore include, but are not limited to, overcoming the indifference of government bureaucrats to satisfying the needs of the public; improving the responsiveness of governments to public concerns; and increasing the quality of services provided. It is a mechanism that also enables the population to participate in the process of governance, as well as a framework for allowing the community's interests to be represented in government decision-making structures.

Within the context of the NPA, decentralization is seen as the means for:

(a) Governments to provide high-quality services that citizens value;

(b) Increasing managerial autonomy, particularly by reducing central administrative controls;

(c) Demanding, measuring, and rewarding both organizational and individual performance;

(d) Enabling managers to acquire human and technological resources to meet performance targets;

(e) Creating a receptiveness to competition and an open-mindedness about which public purposes should be performed by public servants as opposed to the private sector;

(f) Empowering citizens through their enhanced participation in decision-making and development planning and management;

(g) Improving economic and managerial efficiency or effectiveness; and

(h) Enhancing better governance.

(Borins 1994, Hope 2002, Silverman 1992).

Decentralization is therefore crucial to the institutional reforms of Africa's public sectors and represents a major element in the reconstruction of the public sector and the construct of the NPM. Indeed, decentralization falls neatly into the neo-liberal logic of divesting the central state of many of its responsibilities and encouraging the growth of market forces. Decentralization also constitutes a central pillar of the demands for restructuring the African State along more distributional lines. It has been used especially in countries that have been troubled by ethnic conflicts – such as Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda (Bangura, 1999). Since decentralization is seen as a basic problem of management or public administration, donors have been less inhibited in intervening in this area than in democratization or other governance reforms that are perceived to be much more political.

Privatization

Privatization, or the transfer of State assets to the private sector, is a central component of downsizing. It refers to the transfer of control and responsibilities for government functions and services to the private sector – private voluntary organizations or private enterprises. Privatization in Africa has taken several forms. It has included:

(a) Commercializing of government services which are contracted out to an outside agency;

(b) Joint ventures between government agencies/ministries and private entities;

(c) Sale of some government services or functions, such as water supply or telecommunications, to the private sector;

(d) Management contracts for the private sector to manage specific government functions or services such as postal services;

(e) Leasing of government assets that are used to provide public services; and

(f) Granting of concessions to private entities to operate and finance public services delivery in part.

(Hope, 2002).

Privatization can contribute to fiscal stability in a number of ways. Gains can be made on the expenditure side by withdrawing subsidies to loss-making companies and imposing hard budget constraints on the economic decisions of managers. Also, the revenue derived from selling state enterprises to the public can help governments close their fiscal gaps. In Guinea, for example, such sales resulted in a reduction of government-owned assets by more than 50 per cent during the period 1980 - 1991 (Hope, 2002). Similarly, in Togo, during the same period, the government reduced its ownership of producing assets by 38 per cent. Overall, the total number of public enterprises in Africa is estimated to have fallen by about 37 per cent between 1990 and 1995 (Sarbib, 1997), and this figure is likely to have increased significantly since then.

Contracting Out

"Contracting out" refers to the out-sourcing or buying in of goods and services from external sources instead of providing such services in-house (Walsh, 1995). It is a method of privatization that is increasing in popularity due to the emphasis on efficiency and service delivery. Contracting may be between a public organization and a private-sector firm or between one public organization and another. The responsibility of the public organization is to specify what is wanted and let the private or voluntary sector provide it. Contracting out leads to cost savings from inefficient public bureaucracies that are more intent on satisfying the wishes of producer groups than of consumers. Moreover, private contractors can be penalized for poor quality, delays and lack of reliability.

In Africa, though contracting is not entirely new to the public sector, there have been considerable efforts, in recent years, to extend the scope of its application to a wider range of public organizations and activities than before. Hope (2002) reports how in Botswana, parastatals have contracted out a number of services, including those related to maintenance and security. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, non-clinical health services such as cleaning, laundry, catering, security, maintenance and billing are contracted out, while clinical services are contracted out on a limited scale (Russell et al, 1997).

Civil Society Organizations

The role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and NGOs in the delivery of services to the public is on the increase worldwide. In July 1999, African coun-

tries at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted Resolution 1286 affirming the value of popular participation in Africa's socio-economic recovery and transformation.

CSOs, including NGOs, professional organizations and women's groups, make a case for greater cooperation between their activities and those of government and advocates for mutual acceptance of legitimacy and strengths and weaknesses. NGOs and CSOs worldwide have been known to be able to reach poor communities with social services, including health and education.

While it is appreciated that governments must value the energy and creativity that CSOs and NGOs bring to the development arena, NGOs and CSOs on the other hand, need to be transparent in their objectives to reduce government concerns about any subversive activities. Therefore, constant dialogue between government and these organizations will reduce the mutual suspicion of each other's motives.

It is also suggested that joint policies should be developed to define sectors of society, the economy, and the environment in which civil society activity, either independently or in cooperation with government, are encouraged. Paying more attention to CSOs may provide an avenue for addressing, in particular, the social integration challenges of sustainable development and the problems associated with the development of social capital. There is no doubt that the cooperation between government and civil society would promote and implement people-centred and sustainable public service delivery reforms.

3.2 Interorganizational strategies

Many public-sector management interventions have been directed at civil service reform through downsizing, cost containment, and improvements in management skills and knowledge through training. The latter have been traditional areas of activity for donors. However, the primacy of training is being challenged by hitherto relatively neglected avenues of organizational reform. Some of these, like performance management and pay reform, have a more comprehensive view of factors that influence organizational performance and reveal the latest thinking on internal questions of organization and management.

Performance Management

Performance Management is one of the various NPM-inspired measures to address some of the accountability problems mentioned in the previous section. In pursuit of the goal of performance improvement, performance management advocates for the "empowerment" of managers, i.e. vesting the public manager with the power and authority s/he needs to serve the citizen, and strengthen

the links between government and its diverse clientele in civil society (CAPAM, 1994). Underlying the empowerment premise is the assumption that the power or authority that is "delegated" to the average manager would not only be shared with the subordinates, but would also be exercised for the public good (Hope, 2001). This is assumed to increase efficiency, based on the notion that public-sector managers are hampered by rules and regulations, and have few incentives to take risks and to be innovative and service-oriented.

Performance management is also expected to increase accountability because clear and explicit managerial targets, combined with managerial autonomy and incentives to perform, make it easier to establish the basis for managerial account-ability and to achieve outputs (Hills and Gillespie, 1996; Lane, 1995). Further, according to Therkildsen (2001), this in turn increases political accountability by making it easier for managers to match targets with political priorities. Politicians can, in turn, hold managers accountable for their performance, and also perform-ance targets can make service provision more transparent to customers.

According to this line of reasoning, increased transparency and explicit perform-ance targets are further steps toward better democratic control and accountability of the bureaucracy. It is a means of getting results from individuals, teams and the organizations at large, and allows for the development of indicators against which performance can be later measured. Performance management systems are currently in place in Botswana, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda.

Pay Reform

Modern bureaucracies are founded on the premise that individuals who work in them serve the public good as opposed to catering to personal interests. This presupposes a basic income that will allow public servants to carry out their duties without succumbing to extraneous pressures. Pay reform aims at achieving improvements in fiscal balance, efficiency and accountability. The fiscal objective often implies pay reductions, by for instance reducing the wage bill. However, other objectives, including those of efficiency, may imply pay increases in the attempts to increase real wages for lower-level staff and relate pay to performance. Owing to this, pay and grading reform measures have been at the forefront of pay and employment measures.

Pay and grading reforms generally has five objectives:

1. An increase in overall real pay levels;
2. The decompression of pay scales to improve the competitiveness of civil service pay at higher levels;
3. A new grading system based on job evaluations;
4. The introduction of performance-based pay; and

5. The improvement of pay policy-making and administration.

(de Merode and Thomas 1994)

The World Bank and other agencies have tried to link the policy of wage decompression to retrenchment in order to encourage governments to pay living wages to a smaller number of public employees who will remain in the service, as well as offer attractive salaries to senior officials. Bangura (2000) has reported how this policy has been pursued in a few African countries, including Ghana and Uganda. In these countries, government has made a strong commitment to get out of the low wage-corruption, low morale-low performance trap that has bedeviled their public services. Massive retrenchments have been carried out and compensation and redundancy benefits have been offered. According to Hope (2002), the two major contributions to bureaucratic corruption in Africa are the erosion and compression of salary scales of public servants.

There are reports that many countries, including the Gambia and Guinea, have made considerable progress in simplifying their grading structures. This, in turn, has acted as a magnet to attract and motivate some top professionals including those with scarce skills such as physicians and accountants.

The reality in Africa, however, is that even in countries that have made tremendous efforts to restore living wages in their public services, there remains the problem of paying competitive wages that will retain or attract the best staff. Despite reforms, salaries are still much too low in many African public services to retain professional staff, which has contributed to the "brain drain" that Africa has been experiencing since independence. Significant increases in salaries to attract and retain well-skilled staff may, of course, affect resources for other service delivery inputs. How to improve public sector pay and the quantity of other inputs that are essential for efficient service delivery is a challenge that low-income countries in Africa need to confront in their reform programmes.

4. NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: SELECTED APPLICATIONS

4.1 Decentralized Management

Decentralizing management is a strand of NPM derived from "managerialism" which is part of an effort to "debureaucratize" and "delayer" the hierarchies within the public service (Hood, 1991, Ferlie 1996). The key concern is to give managers the freedom to manage their units in order to achieve the most efficient output.

The five main dimensions to decentralized management are as follows (Bangura 2000):

  (a) Breaking up of monolithic bureaucracies into autonomous agencies;

  (b) Devolution of budgets and financial controls;

  (c) Promotion of quasi-markets in public sector transactions;

  (d) Separation of provision and provisioning functions; and

  (e) Development of new forms of corporate governance and board of directors model for the restructured public service.

The first and key trend is that, traditionally, monolithic public bureaucracies are downsizing, contracting out functions and breaking up into more autonomous business units or agencies. Downsizing arises from the concern for the size and cost of public-sector employment, which has not only contributed to the growing fiscal crisis and budget deficits, but also depressed real wages and maintenance in capital budgets. Like in the private sector, governments around the world have responded by putting limits on the size and cost of the public sector. Ghana and Uganda, for example, have experienced massive cuts in the size of their civil services, in the case of the former by almost half, and the latter by almost 40 per cent since 1987 (Larbi, 1999). The Zimbabwean civil service has also been cut by about 12 per cent since the commencement of civil service reform in 1991 (Makumbe, 1997:21).

Agencification requires the devolution of budgets to give managers increased control through which they are held responsible through performance targets. In principle, these agencies have greater managerial flexibility in the allocation of human resources (including the right to hire and fire) in return for greater accountability for results. In Ghana and Uganda, the Customs and Excise, and Internal Revenue Departments were hived off from the civil service to form

separate agencies in the 1980s (Larbi,1998). The aim was to separate executive functions from policy-making and free managers from civil service rules and conditions as well as offering them better incentives linked to performance.

The development of quasi-markets in public sector transactions is a key feature of agencification. In quasi-markets, non-profit organizations compete with profit-oriented ones for public contracts (Bangura, 2000), and require a separation of production and provisioning functions of departments, i.e. the central policy units may be entrusted with the provisioning and the executive agencies with production. The objective of this dimension of decentralized management is to divorce the provision from the production of public services. This separation of provision from production implies making a distinction (organizational and financial) between defining the need for paying for public services and actually producing those services. Lacey (1997) outlines how this form of managerialism was adopted in the United Kingdom National Health Service (NHS) where autonomous hospitals (NHS Trusts) produce services for which District Health Authorities provide financing by purchasing the services. In New Zealand, where the reforms are believed to be driven by a strong commitment to transaction-costs economics and principal-agent theory, efforts have been made to separate activities that have a clear commercial content from administrative ones, and to corporatize the former in a search for profitability in the delivery of services (Halligan, 1997)

Box 1: Decentralized Management in Uganda

The decentralization of the decision-making process from Uganda Wildlife Authority headquarters to the field, empowered the previously disenfranchised field-based staff and allowed some autonomy for each protected area in terms of the development of management plans, the disbursement of funds against annual operating plan and the evaluation of the revenue-generating potential of each Protected Area.

Adaptive management provides an effective means for mitigating risks. Project experience, as well as various Quality Assurance Group reviews, showed that many correct - if unpopular or risky - decisions could be implemented effectively if there is strong management support for them.

Source: World Bank (2003)

The final dimension of management decentralization is the adoption of new forms of corporate governance and the board of directors model (Ferlie, 1996), which aims to reduce the power of elected representatives and minimize the influence of labour unions on management.

4.2 Subsidiarity

Closely related to decentralized management is the concept of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is the principle of devolving political decisions to the lowest practical level. It is a principle of management based on sharing authority, responsibility and provisions for more efficiency in the production and management of resources and services. Subsidiarity differs from "devolution" or "delegation", in that the power originally rests with the smaller, lower and more regional entities, and is delegated "upwards" at the discretion of the latter, and not at the discretion of the central authority. It implies a kind of reverse delegation, namely a delegation of power from the outside to the centre.

The South African Government, prior to the end of apartheid, was centralized and excessively paternalistic. When the new Constitution was drafted, there was a demand for the Government to be based on the principle of subsidiarity. The interim Constitution of 1993, and the final Constitution of 1996, gave local authorities more power by making them autonomous. The devolution of political power to the lowest practical level was important in moving towards subsidiarity. Instead of a "central" government, it became a "national" government.

The Government was restructured from a linear and hierarchical model into spheres – national, provincial and local. Carpenter (1999) describes how the Constitution requires cooperation and respect between the three spheres. They must operate only with the power conferred on them by the Constitution. Municipalities have the executive and legislative power to take the initiative in the management of local affairs. The legislative (Parliament) and the provincial governments are not allowed to interfere with the power and functions of the local authorities. At the same time, national and provincial governments must ensure that municipalities perform their functions effectively and are obligated to assist them if they need help.

Box 2: Subsidiarity in Benin

Benin's national agricultural research was reorganized so that decisions would be made at the regional level. Since 1997, the regional programme's priority setting for development-oriented agricultural research uses a bottom-up approach (i.e. from the local level to the regional, national and sub regional (West Africa). The subsidiarity process is based on different interfaces (local committees, 2 regional committees, and a national committee) and it facilitates dialogue between research, various users and clients. In order for subsidiarity to succeed the interfaces must be effective and sustainable. Using this bottom-up approach, Benin's agricultural research has made progress in research management, scientific cooperation, fundraising and research implementation.

Source: A. Matthess and D. Arodokoun (2001)

4.3　Cost Recovery: User Fees and Charges

One of the major developments in the provision of public services has been the introduction of user fees or charges. Charges to consumers for public utilities represent an attempt to diversify financing for public services and reshape public spending. These policies have assumed increasing importance in developing countries, especially in Africa, in the 1980s, as governments faced slower economic growth and rising deficits that made public expenditure levels unsustainable (Adams and Hartnett, 1996). User fees have been introduced at different levels of education in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda, and in other countries implementing SAPs (Larbi, 1998).

In comparison to other developing regions, user fee reforms have been most extensive in sub-Saharan Africa. According to Bennet et al (1995), this is because the gap between resources and needs, and the influence of international donors, has perhaps been greatest in Africa. The key rationale of the introduction of user fees in Africa, therefore, has been to raise additional revenue in the face of increasing demand for services. User fees also serve to increase market discipline by preventing the over-use of services by consumers apart from improving quality and fostering responsiveness to the needs of consumers.

The objective of introducing user fees is cost-sharing. Implementing such a policy is supposed to help the poor because it mobilizes more resources from better-off groups that could then be used to provide services for poorer groups. In Guinea Bissau, for example, user fees in health care have consistently contributed between 30 and 45 per cent of the operating costs of health services (Shaw and Griffin, 1996:22). However, user fees are not without their problems. Good administrative and management systems are needed to complement such a policy. There has been some evidence that the introduction of user fees has made access to social services more difficult for the poor, especially in the initial years of the scheme. Therefore, exemption systems and safety nets need to be designed so that user fees fall mainly on services consumed by the non-poor. Such systems include ensuring that information about incomes (on which to base exemption decisions) are collected in an effective manner, especially for large numbers of people in the informal sector.

Box 3: Cost Sharing: Towards Sustainable Health Care in Sub-Saharan Africa - Selected Examples from Central African Republic, Zaire, Senegal, Cameroon and Guinea-Bissau

The Central African Republic has adopted, since 1991, four different user fee schemes: a charge for services rendered; a flat charge for each episode of illness; a flat fee per visit; and prepayment for a year of service.

A study of the Bwananda District in Zaire showed that, between 1986 and 1988, user fees accounted for 109 to 111 per cent of the operating costs of the health centres. In Bwamanda hospital, between 1986 and 1988, the share of operating expenses covered by user fees was 24-30 per cent. The fees were then supplemented by insurance payments, which accounted for 22-33 per cent of operating costs, and employer billings, which accounted for another 13-22 per cent. Revenues from cost-sharing at this tertiary level therefore ranged between 59 per cent and 75 percent of total operating costs between 1986 and 1988.

In Kasango District in Zaire, user fees have simultaneously reduced use of the district hospital as a first point of service and have increased attendance at local district health centres.

Senegal adopted the Bamako Initiative in 1991 to help pay for pharmaceutical products through users fees. A representative national sample revealed that the contribution of user fees to public health facilities was 5-11 per cent for hospitals, 8-23 per cent for health centers, 14-35 per cent for health posts and 87 per cent on average for health huts.

Seven public heath facilities were studied in Adamaoua Province, Cameroon. Three facilities introduced users fees with improved quality in services, two introduced fees without corresponding increases in quality and two were held as controls. The results argue that when efficient low-cost care became available locally, people used it rather than a distant facility that might be free.

Successful prepayment schemes operate in Guinea-Bissau and Zaire. In Guinea-Bissau, villages are participating in a prepayment scheme for drugs and basic services through annual collections made shortly after harvest when cash is readily available. In Zaire's Bwamanda health zone, annual collections for a pre-payment scheme for hospital services are made during the season when cash incomes are highest.

Source: World Bank (1996)

4.4 Performance Contracting

Another key trend in the NPM approach is performance contracting as an instrument to reform state-owned enterprises. Performance contracts or agreements specify standards of performance or quantifiable targets which a government requires public officials or the management of public agencies or ministries to meet over a stated period of time (Hope 2002). As part of the performance orientation in government, the common purposes of performance contracting are to clarify the objectives of service organizations and their relationship with government, and to facilitate performance evaluation based on results instead of conformity with bureaucratic rules and regulations. The setting of specific performance targets, in a format that can be monitored, is intended to provide a basis for evaluating performance and improving accountability in the public enterprise sector. This illustrates the shift in emphasis from the input and procedure-oriented controls of the past to the new paradigm of output or results-oriented controls.

In line with the new institutionalist perspective in PSM reforms, as reflected in public choice theories, and in the policy prescriptions based on them, performance contracting between governments and public enterprises (PEs) is increasingly being applied as an instrument for restructuring PEs and for managing the Government-PE interface. Underlying performance contracting, and in line with NPM, is the belief that while granting PE management operational autonomy, there is a need to hold it accountable for performance.

Box 4: Performance Contracting in Ghana

In little more than a decade, Ghana has transformed the structure and strategy of its rural water supply sector. By 2000, district assemblies and communities played a significant role in planning supplies. The new policy and structure has attracted extra funds, and work is accelerating.

This reform process started with an extended dialogue with the major stakeholders in the sector, out of which a new rural water and sanitation policy was developed. The policy was then implemented in several large pilot projects, supported by a number of external agencies, and finally the lessons from those projects were incorporated into the national programme itself.

The success of this approach was due to the fact that national and international NGOs were contracted to build the capacity of local-level NGOs and CSOs. The Community Water Supply Agency (CWSA) was created as a facilitating agency rather than an implementer. CWSA, as a semi-autonomous public-sector agency, signs an annual performance contract with the State Enterprise Commission. It is committed to staying efficient and lean, below 200 staff, and highly decentralized to its ten regional offices.

Source: World Bank (2002)

Whilst there have been some constraints on the capacity to implement perform-ance contracting in public enterprises in Africa, the World Bank has approved performance contracts as one of the principal measures of reform for PEs, and the system has been adopted in a number of African countries including Nigeria, Ghana and the Gambia.

4.5 Accrual Accounting

Countries that have already adopted accrual accounting have generally been at the forefront of public management reforms; Botswana is a case in point. Accrual accounting supplements cash accounting systems to ensure that the financial information available to management is current, and provides meaningful analy-sis of resource usage within a department. The adoption of accruals is a significant and radical reform to the financial management of governments.

Box 5: The Case of Botswana

Government accounting is maintained on a cash basis plus a system of modified cash and accruals for special funds and trading accounts. The data for the computerized system, which was first introduced in 1977, is processed in batches and budgets, accounts. There are 27 local authori-ties in Botswana: 6 urban councils, 9 district councils and 12 land boards. All councils are required to produce annual accounts within three months of the year-end and to have them audited by an auditor appointed by the office of the Auditor General. Accrual basis of accounting is used and the training of professional accountants is provided by the Botswana Account-ancy College (BAC). BAC is a private sector college largely subsidized by the Botswana Government and the Debswana Diamond Company. There appears to be a strong recognition by Government of the importance of establishing a supply of qualified and trained accountants for the public and private sectors.

Source: ESSAG (2002)

These reforms aim to hold management responsible for outcomes and outputs whilst eliminating controls on inputs. In this context, it is expected that manag-ers should be responsible for all costs associated with the outputs produced, not only the immediate outlays. Accruals allow for the capture of these full costs, thereby supporting effective and efficient decision-making by managers.

4.6 Commercialization

Despite the growing interest in privatization, it is clear that PEs will continue to feature prominently in the organizational landscapes of developing countries. It is therefore important to be able to improve their performance.

Commercialization is a technique of managing public enterprises (PEs) or state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to make them profitable. In many public enterprises, performance problems arise primarily from insufficient autonomy and authority for managers at the level of the firm, particularly in relation to pricing, procurement, staffing, performance management, and marketing; and from the State's unwillingness to create owners who can protect the capital employed. By using the market-based solution, PEs become more like private enterprises by placing a stronger emphasis on profitability as the major criterion of performance. They are empowered with greater managerial flexibility in resources management, better pay and greater accountability for results.

Box 6: Commercialization in Africa – Ethiopian Airlines

Ethiopian Airlines, formed in 1946 as a government-owned enterprise, has established a world reputation for technical excellence, managerial efficiency and financial soundness. This reputation has survived the political and economic difficulties that the country has faced before and after the revolution in 1973. The airline has developed a highly profitable network of international and domestic routes and routes within Africa generate over a quarter of its revenues.

The foundations of its success lay in the management approach with Trans World Airlines during the 1950s. Not only was the technical quality of the fleet of aircraft continuously updated, but the technical capacity to maintain aircraft and to train crews, mechanics, cabin staff, and marketing and financial staff was also built up. These facilities now provide services not only to Ethiopian Airlines but also to other African and Middle Eastern airlines, many of which have seconded Ethiopian aircrews and technicians.

Apart from a short period in the late 1970s, political imperatives have not intruded on the selection of senior managers. The directors include cabinet ministers, but they have never interfered day-to-day management. Route development, pricing policy, and hiring and firing responsibilities have all rested with management. Only on wage and salary levels has there been a political interest in maintaining levels consistent with other local employees.

Beyond technical issues, management's primary success has been in maintaining a purely commercial attitude towards its activities. Financial viability has been the dominant criterion for both old and new routes. The

management exacts tight financial discipline and requires timely payment from the Ethiopian government either for transporting officials on scheduled flights or for using its aircraft.

The result has been a net profit every year (except 1979) and a willingness of international lenders to finance new aircraft. The airline receives no subsidies from the government, except for a diminishing tax exemption. Its financial independence on both revenue account and capital account has left managers freer to manage and the government less inclined to intrude. The final product is a low-cost and efficient service that both supports national and regional integration and earns foreign exchange from its international operations.

Source: UNDP (1995)

Market-based approaches to nterprise reform might entail some combination of the following measures to shift power away from State bureaus to the portfolio management agencies, banks, and boards of directors (UNDP 1995):

(a) Transforming the enterprise into a profit-maximizing commercial entity and having this policy communicated unequivocally by the owners;

(b) Imposing strict budgetary constraints;

(c) Terminating government subsidies to the enterprise;

(d) Appraising and rewarding the performance of individuals and groups in relation to their achievement of organizational goals and;

(e) Assigning enterprise management the power to hire and fire workers and evaluate their performance, set product prices, and decide on product lines and output.

Many problems of public enterprises performance can be traced to difficulties with goal clarity and measurement, and the different views regarding goals and priorities held by stakeholders. Goal specification in public enterprises is complicated by the necessity for both commercial and non-commercial objectives because non-commercial objectives are more difficult to describe and measure accurately than commercial objectives. However, an organization with goals that are poorly specified will have difficulty maintaining reasonable levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Without clear objectives and a means of monitoring benchmarks, a structured, purposeful, goal-directed organization can be quickly reduced to a disjointed, uncommitted rabble.

4.7   ICTs in Public Service Delivery

Information technology (IT) has been included as one of the key strategies for public service reforms. It is now seen as an essential facilitator of service improvement particularly when governments worldwide are facing an increasing trend towards knowledge-based production and the communications revolution. Expenditures by governments on computers and management information systems have risen rapidly in many countries and now represent major items in their budgets.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is pivotal to modern government and fundamental to the strategies for public service reform. The creation of new information and communication systems are seen as an essential component in the creation of accountability. When a decision is taken, information about that decision and its outcomes must flow to all those to whom the decision maker is accountable (Heeks, 1998). Without such an information flow, and without the information system to carry that flow, there can be no accountability because there can be no knowledge of the decision.

Whilst pursuing democratic/political processes, in managing resources, executing functions, measuring performance and in service delivery, information is the basic ingredient. Therefore, there is great potential for these trends of information-age reform to bring significant benefits to Africa because government has been, and still remains, the single largest collector, user, holder and producer of information. Information is a central resource for all staff levels and for all activities.

The work of government is thus very information-intensive and four main types of formal information are identifiable (Heeks 2002):

- *Information to support internal management.* This includes information about staff for personnel management, and information about budgets and accounts for financial management. Like the other three types of information, it can be used for everything from day-to-day operational implementation to long-term policy analysis and planning.

- *Information to support public administration and regulation.* This includes information that records the details of the main 'entities': people, business enterprises, buildings, land plots, imports/exports, etc. It is used for a variety of purposes such as legal, judicial and fiscal.

- *Information to support public services.* Examples include education (e.g. school staff records), health (e.g. patient records), transport (e.g. passenger reservation information) and public utilities (e.g. customer billing information).

- *Information made publicly available.* Examples include press releases, consultation papers, details of policies, laws and regulations, and details of benefits and entitlements.

Given this information-intensity, changes in information systems must be an essential part of all reform initiatives in Africa, and changes in information technology will have a great potential in efficiency and effectiveness gains in the public sector. In theory, everything that IT can do could be done by some other means. However, in practice, its ability to increase the speed and/or reduce the cost of information tasks means it can do things that would not otherwise be contemplated.

Box 7: ICTs in Secondary Schools in Senegal

The project on "youth cyberspaces in secondary schools in Senegal" was implemented by the Group for Study and Education of the Population (GEEP) in partnership with IDRC/Acacia, UNFPA, and a Canadian NGO, "2/3 Canada". The project was conducted under the authority of the Minister of National Education of Senegal.

Aware that little attention was being paid to problems of the environment and reproductive health in the country's school system, GEEP initiated "family life education" (FLE) clubs in several schools. These clubs are run entirely by the school community (students and teachers). They are scattered throughout the country, and thus face major communication problems, so that the different clubs tend to be unaware of each other's experience and activities.

The project seeks to use ICTs to improve the learning, motivation and awareness model of the Family Life Education Clubs (FLE) on issues relating to population, environment and sustainable development, to promote the use of an interdisciplinary model for distance education, to help young people become more open to the community, and to encourage interchange between clubs and between young people. The project also seeks to study the impact of ICTs on club activities and on students' academic performance.

The project was intended from the outset to influence education policy by introducing ICTs in the schools. Moreover, with the participatory approach taken by the GEEP team, consistent with the Acacia strategy, it was hoped to change the attitude of the school community towards innovation. This project fits within the two strategic thrusts of Senegal, which are to strengthen the education system by introducing ICTs and to upgrade human resources and counter unfavourable demographic trends (by improving preventive and reproductive health) consistent with the Ten-year Education and Training Programme.

Source: Khamathe Sene and Ramata Thioune, Acacia Policy Influence Study/ Senegal (2003)

E-Government, whether seen as a component of NPM or an extension of NPM, should be seen to encompass all ICTs in all activities of the public sector. The key innovation is computer networks and the three domains are e-Administration, e-Citizens and Services and e-Society.

There are a growing number of e-government projects in Africa, some of which are contributing to public sector reform and delivering efficiency gains in service delivery. E-Citizens and Services, for example, deals particularly with the relationship between government and citizens: either as voters/stakeholders from whom the African public sector should derive its legitimacy, or as customers who consume public services (Heeks 2002). The key aims in this domain include providing citizens with details of public sector activities; increasing the input of citizens into public sector decisions and actions; and improving the services delivered to members of the public along dimensions such as quality, convenience and cost.

Box 8: Supporting Free and Fair Elections in South Africa

Following difficulties in the 1994 elections, South Africa's independent Electoral Commission was charged with making sure that the country's second democratic elections in 1999 were 'free and fair'. This election was vitally important for the stability of the South African political climate and for ensuring that democratic processes were solidly in place. Through large-scale implementation of unique information technology application, information, education and communication (IEC) was able to ensure that all South African citizens could have their voices heard. The effort included the creation of a nationwide satellite-based wide-area network and infrastructure; a bar-code system used to register 18.4 million voters in just nine days; a geographic information system used to create voting districts; a national common voters' role; a sophisticated election results centre for managing the process; and the training of 300,000 people. The massive programme was completed in less than two years, in time for the vote. For this, the IEC received the 2000 Computer world Smithsonian Award for most outstanding programme in government and non-profit organizations category.

Source: Heeks (2002)

The example of an e-citizen application in Africa is given in box 8. However, it must be noted that, in general terms, the diffusion of e-Government in Africa has been slow. It is a fact that African governments have fewer e-government initiatives than industrialized countries; make less use of ICTs in their work than industrialized countries; and use older generations of technology than industrialized countries. A major explanation is financial. However there are also strategic

challenges such as undeveloped telecommunication systems and networks and also ineffective legal, human and institutional infrastructures that pose limitations on the "e-readiness" of many African countries.

4.8 Public Reporting

Public Reporting on the financial performance of government agencies is an element of good governance and financial accountability. It involves providing information on the financial and managerial performance of public departments that enables the public to monitor and assess performance of government activities. The aim is to encourage dialogue so as to lead to improved service delivery.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international bodies have developed a number of codes and standards that set out "good practices" in the areas of policy transparency, data dissemination and financial regulation and supervision. In relation to public reporting, the IMF has identified the following codes and standards:

(a) The public availability of information – the public should be provided with full information on the past, current and projected fiscal activity of government;

(b) Open budget preparation, execution and reporting – budget documentation should specify fiscal policy objectives, the macroeconomics framework, the policy basis for the budget, and identifiable major fiscal risks;

(c) Budget data should be classified and presented in a way that facilitates policy analysis and promotes accountability;

(d) Procedures for the execution and monitoring of approved expenditures should be clearly specified; and

(e) Fiscal reporting should be timely, comprehensive and reliable, and should identify deviations from the budget.

The Office of the Auditor-General also provides a critical link in the chain of public accountability, a role that is both unique and vital to the democratic process of responsible government. The Auditor-General's role is to assist the legislature in overseeing the management of public money, by providing independent assessments of, and advice about, government accountability and performance. Reports should provide assessments and also highlight issues requiring the attention of the legislature or government, and should also contain recommendations that could assist government organizations to improve their management and performance.

> **Box 9: Public Reporting in Mauritius**
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> Mauritius has tried to combine the authority of state control with the flexibility of a private sector regulator. Through an act approved by Parliament in 1989, the Mauritius Accounting and Auditing Standards Committee (MAASC), was set up to formulate and publish accounting and auditing standards and guidelines; and to advise the Minister on the improvement and harmonization of accounting and auditing standards. With this approach compliance becomes compulsory since failure to comply with the provisions of the MAASC Act 1989 and therefore the standards renders that person liable to a fine and imprisonment on conviction. The constitution of the committee ensures that it has both the expertise and wide-ranging representation of various groups to make the standards acceptable. Adaptation of IAS to reflect the local environment provides a good starting point. However, since consensus and compromise are involved in the adaptation of IAS, much of the value of having conformity with IAS is lost. By adopting IASs, Mauritius can hope for a better reporting system that is useful for economic decision making within the country as well as fulfilling the requirements of international trade and business.
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> *Source: UMSAC (2002)*

4.9 Citizens Charter

A key feature of the NPM is the concept of perceiving the citizen as a "customer" of public services. In the context of public sector reform, efforts to make public service agencies more accountable to the public have included the adoption of Citizens Charters. Citizens should be consulted about the level and quality of public services and, whenever possible, be given the choice of services. Citizens should also be informed about the level and quality of services they will receive, and they should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. Moreover, they should be informed about how national departments and provincial administration are run, how much they cost and who is in charge.

In 1991, the British government launched the Citizens Charter. It was designed to raise the standard of public services and make them more responsive to their users (Butcher 1997:55) and to encourage public servants to think about what they do in relation to how it affects their customers. The Charter spells out a number of key principles that every citizen is entitled to expect, including:

(a) The setting and publication of explicit standards for services and the publication of actual performance against these standards;

(b) Information and openness about the provision of services; and

(c) The efficient and economical delivery of services within the resources the nation can afford.

(Cabinet Office, 1992).

Box 10 provides an outline of the principles of the African Public Service Charter. The Charter for the Public Service in Africa was adopted at the third Pan African Conference of Ministers responsible for the Civil Service, in Windhoek, Namibia, in 2001. The Charter highlights the need to adapt the different public services in Africa to the new requirements of public service, so as to be able to anticipate or accompany the profound changes that African countries are experiencing. It also takes into account the prevailing socio-economic conditions, including globalization, and the need to create an enabling environment for private sector growth. The Charter also defines a framework to guide the public services in Africa in taking such legislative, regulatory, technical and practical measures as may be required to create the conditions for the proper functioning of the public service and improve the quality of its services.

Box 10: Fundamental Principles of the African Public Service Charter

Principle of Equality of Treatment

All public services shall recognize the equality of citizens before the law and will not be discriminated against based on the place of origin, race, gender, religion, ethnic group, philosophical or political convictions or other personal considerations.

Principle of Neutrality

The public service that serves the interest of the public shall not discriminate against its employees because of their personal traits. The public service shall remain neutral in respect to the government of the day and this fundamental principle will be respected by all administrations.

Principle of Legality

Public service shall be provided in strict compliance with the law.

Principle of Continuity

Public service shall be provided on an ongoing basis and in all its component parts, in accordance with the rules governing its operation. Failure to comply with the principle of continuity may incur the liability of the administration in respect of any person who might have suffered harm on account of such failure.

Source: Charter for the Public Service in Africa, Third Pan-African Conference of the Ministers of Civil Service (2001)

Citizens Charters exist in both South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Tanzania there are plans for Ministries to publish "social pacts" setting out the standard of services that the public can expect. Launched in 1997, the Batho Pele-People First initiative in South Africa is based on a set of national principles for public service (Therkildsen, 2001). Ghana and Uganda have also shown good practices in customer-oriented public service. In Ghana, the public service reform programme is a sub-component of the country's National Institutional Renewal Programme (Balogun 2001) and, amongst other areas, focuses on the development of customer-service orientation, promotion of cost and time consciousness in the civil service, and improvement of records and information management systems. The public service reform programme in Uganda has focused mainly on the transformation of public service organizations with customer-oriented service delivery units (Kyarimpa, 1996). Substantial powers and resources have been delegated to lower-level service delivery agents and also capacity-building programmes have been implemented that aim to introduce client-oriented attitudes in the public service.

5. CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT REFORMS

Public sector management in Africa has faced a number of challenges that have limited the scope, speed and quality of services rendered. There is no doubt that there are observable limits to the ability of a government to solve all economic and social problems. Nevertheless there is a consensus that public sector performance, particularly in the area of service delivery, needs to be improved. Such challenges include institutional capacity; multiple accountability; declining public service ethics; declining social values and civil service morale; and corruption. African governments need to increase their efforts to curtail these challenges to well-meaning public sector reforms.

5.1 Institutional Capacity

Political, social and economic development has been declining at an alarming rate. Many countries registered negative economic growth rates during the 1980s and 1990s, while the overall growth rate remained constant at around 2 per cent in the past decade. Despite efforts made at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, the situation has indeed worsened. It has been agreed that programmes and strategies for Africa's economic recovery and development have not been implemented in full because public sector institutions have been afflicted by problems of corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, poor coordination, poor management and institutional capacity, non-existent salary policies and political interference. These weaknesses have stifled the process of socio-economic development across the continent.

It is therefore understood that the endurance and viability of the democratic exercise in Africa in the long term will be determined by the effectiveness, fairness and public accountability of its political and public sector institutions. Good political governance entails an effective separation of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive. The legislatures are mandated to have adequate constitutional powers and the political legitimacy to regulate their own affairs and play an active part in law making, and in checking and monitoring the activities of the executive. However, in reality, the African legislature is one of the weakest links in the governance process. Its institutional, technical, and administrative capacities are inadequate to support members of parliament to perform their

functions efficiently. In addition, members themselves do not have the necessary education, skills, information and knowledge to perform their functions effectively. Physical infrastructure, information and communication technology, as well as other facilities, are also lacking or are inadequate.

An independent judiciary is an important institution in terms of ensuring accountability, transparency and legitimacy. If appropriately constituted and enabled to perform its constitutionally mandated functions, the judiciary is the only independent institution in the entire governance system that can ensure justice to the poor, illiterate and disadvantaged. However, this institution lacks financial resources, material and supportive administrative infrastructure, electronic equipment and sufficiently stocked legal libraries. In addition, the political appointment of judges and magistrates, low salary and poor working conditions, have had a negative impact on performance.

With the support of the civil service, or public administration, the executive is mandated to formulate policies, programmes and strategies, and monitor their implementation. Historically, the executive in Africa has been the most powerful institution of governance. However, in many cases, the executive is unable to respond effectively and efficiently to the demands of the people. It has the constitutional authority and political power to perform its functions, but it does not have the institutional capacities to fulfill those functions efficiently and effectively.

In the case of the civil service, the mandate of civil servants is to manage the institutions of governance, and also advise ministers on a wide range of issues such as health, education, transport, economic growth and poverty reduction. They also assist in the design and delivery of public services, and in the drafting of rules and regulations. However, most of the public servants lack the ability to formulate, implement and monitor policies, programmes and strategies focused on economic growth and sustainable development. In addition, they do not have adequate physical infrastructure, office equipment and other facilities to perform their duties in a professional manner. Many civil services lack motivation and are most of the time demoralized due to low salaries, poor working conditions, and appointment based on criteria other than merit.

CSOs play a very important role in promoting good governance, acting as watchdogs for human rights against abuse of power and authority. They also play the role of forging partnerships between society and governments, thus providing channels of communication and flow of information between government and citizens. Lack of regular funding is a major factor affecting CSO capacity. Many of them lack the organizational and managerial abilities that are necessary for fund-raising and the technical expertise in advocacy. Many others are not democratically organized, and are not accountable to either stakeholders or

beneficiaries. This undermines their capacity and effectiveness in articulating the concerns of the poor and in promoting their interests.

It becomes evident from the foregoing analysis that the main vehicle in government is the public service and the people who run it. Thus, mobilization and harnessing of this resource is very critical. Building critical institutional capacities in Africa for good governance, economic growth and development is therefore a pre-requisite. However, any reform to this end should be carefully formulated, programmed and implemented, taking into consideration the specific needs of each country.

5.2 Multiple Accountability

The importance of accountability within public sector reforms has been highlighted in the previous section. The question that remains, however, is: to whom should public servants be accountable? Heeks (1998) notes that there is a broad set of accountabilities in the public sector. These include:

- Managerial accountability: to senior managers within the organization. For example, public servants may be held accountable by their immediate boss for their attendance record.
- Political accountability: to those institutions that provide the political legitimacy of the organization. For example, PSO senior managers may be held accountable by politicians for the overall achievements of their organization, or for particular projects that have been implemented.
- Financial accountability: to those institutions that provide the financing for the organization. For example, project managers may be held accountable by a funding organization for the expenditure on their project.
- Public accountability: to citizens outside the organization. For example, a Minister or Permanent Secretary may be held accountable by the public for corrupt activities within their Ministry. This is a combination of (a) ultimate political accountability, since public institutions are supposed to derive ultimate legitimacy from the citizenry, and (b) client accountability, since citizens are normally the intended recipients of the services a PSO provides.

Public administrators are answerable to the public on how well they have safeguarded their interests. In the same vein, public servants are answerable to the politicians. Particularly in developed countries, public servants often face a situation of being financially, managerially and ethically accountable to the public and the political system. A wide-ranging and controversial debate has arisen about the concept and practice of accountability and the interdependence between the

administrative and political system. Efforts to ensure accountability are often frustrated by conflicting expectations from the public and the political bosses.

The New Zealand Government recognized that as part of its civil service reform programme, the lines of accountability between the bureaucracy and the political executive needed to be clarified. The relationships between the ministers and departmental chief executives were outlined. The Ministerial role is to set the policy agenda, determine priorities, specify designed outcomes and output levels, and then monitor the pertinent performance at the departmental level. The task of the chief executive is to satisfy these requirements and to take responsibility for any shortcomings in quality or quantity of output (Kaul 1998:24). The above experience shows that accountability in the public service can be enhanced by a tighter definition of tasks.

5.3 Declining Public Service Ethics

Public service ethics are the traditional values of the public service, which emphasize equity, probity, integrity, moral conduct and political neutrality. The public service should be an ethical institution as the protectors of the public interest. The concept of ethics derives from ethos, and implies the character or custom of a people. It denotes the values associated with right or wrong, appropriate practices or inappropriate practices. Public service delivery will be enhanced through an organization culture that strengthens employee involvement, rewards teamwork, recognizes individual effort and incorporates the needs of clients and users.

Declining Social Values

One of the major challenges to public sector management reforms is the declining social value of society itself. Values such as integrity, honesty, dependability, helpfulness, impartiality, courteousness, and fairness are gradually disappearing from the public services (Agere and Mendoza 1999: 26). Unfortunately, in most African societies, there is no system for reinforcing these values.

A key factor underlying the ineffectiveness of administrative and financial accountability systems is the endorsement of "wealth at all costs" by many African societies. Public office holders and public servants who do not appear to have "prospered" from occupying public positions are treated with scant respect. This declining value tends to encourage inefficiency and misappropriation of public money.

Declining Civil Service Morale

Lam (1997) noted that declining civil service morale is an impediment to the implementation of NPM techniques. The argument is that public sector reform

is unlikely to be successful if public servants regard themselves as being involuntarily pledged to perform to externally imposed standards without commensurate remuneration. Fear factors include:

- Fears of being measured, and increased possibility of loss of jobs;
- Fears that staff do not have the necessary skills;
- Increased paper work and workload; and
- Health and safety concerns.

These fears underlie the resistance to changes embodied in the NPM. Poor pay and inconsistent management practices in many African public services have also contributed to low morale.

Corruption

McCormack (1997:419) defines corruption on the part of a public official as behavior that deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of pecuniary or status gains. Corruption is a pervasive phenomenon. It increases the cost of public services delivered to the customers and citizens and is usually 'behind the screen' and not easily detected, particularly "petty" corruption among lower cadres of the civil services, as well as "grand" corruption at top management levels.

According to Hope (2002), the two major contributions to bureaucratic corruption in Africa are the erosion and the compression of salary scales of public servants. Transparency International (1997) has also documented a number of corrupt practices to testify to this dimension. Among them include the case of a former Ethiopian Deputy Minister and Minister of Defense who was charged with abuse of power and jailed; a former top official of the Malawi Congress Party accused of serious fraud; and corruption and mismanagement in school systems in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania by corrupt teachers collecting cash before enrolling children.

In many African countries, a variety of measures have been taken to curb ethical violations. Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have experimented with the institution of the ombudsmen, anti-corruption bills, and a variety of institutional mechanisms to enforce ethical behaviour. Ethiopia and Nigeria provide good examples of anti-corruption measures being implemented in Africa. In Nigeria, a bill passed in 1999 prohibits and punishes bribery and corruption by public officials. Ethiopia also took similar steps to stem corruption by creating an Anti-Corruption Commission in 2001.

In some cases, anti-corruption initiatives have only been partially successful in achieving some of the objectives behind these measures. In the first instance,

many have been introduced in an overall political and policy environment that has not been sufficiently conducive to the success of the measures. The nature of the State and governance and commitment at the highest political level are therefore crucial prerequisites for any successful drive to curb and punish ethical violations. Secondly, some of the anti-corruption measures that have been introduced have been partial in nature, focusing mainly on sanctions, and not the source. Third, many of the institutions that were established to promote ethics and accountability often lack the resources, public visibility, impartiality and public support that are critical to their success.

The enormity of the task of dealing with corrupt practices and to promote ethics and accountability in the African public service is not to be underestimated. In spite of setbacks experienced in this regard, it is still possible to score gains in a meaningful manner. Central to this dimension is the need for dedicated and sustained implementation of comprehensive, broad- based and self-reinforcing measures by the government and the public within the framework of democratic, responsive, transparent and accountable governance.

5.4 Access to ICTs

Accessing ICT-borne data requires a whole range of overt resources including a telecommunications infrastructure to provide network access, an electrical infrastructure to make the ICTs work, a skills infrastructure to keep all the technology working, money to buy or access the ICTs, usage skills to use the ICTs, and literacy skills to read the content. Most African countries simply do not have these resources. In a world where 80 per cent of the population has no access to reliable telecommunications, and one third has no access to electricity (Panos 1998), it is hardly surprising that the introduction of e-government and its various applications have been slow in Africa.

However, the global movement to an information age and the worldwide technological innovations of recent years, along with other structural and economic developments, have led to rapidly falling costs for ICTs. These have combined with changes facing global and national telecommunication regimes to present a clear window of opportunity for appropriate "leapfrog" strategies to accelerate the development of the continent.

The African Information Society Initiative (AISI) was launched at the twenty-second session of ECA's Conference of Ministers in charge of social and economic development and planning in May 1996. The AISI provides support to 28 African countries to develop their own National Information and Communication Infrastructure (NICI) policies, plans and strategies, including e-government. Even though, realistically, many African public services will not be using ICTs

hands-on in any significant numbers for the foreseeable future, there are still posi-
tive developments in this area and there is now general consensus that the creation
of an African information infrastructure is both a necessity and an opportunity to
accelerate development in all spheres of African economic and social activities.

6. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE

The public sector plays a significant role in national development. To remain viable, efficient and effective in responding to the dynamic needs of the citizen, it has to embrace strategies that can enhance improved productivity and the quality of services delivered. Towards this end, a number of strategies to enhance public sector performance are proffered for adaptation by African governments. These strategies, while not exhaustive, touch on the key requirements for improving public sector performance in general, and public service delivery in particular. Among these are Total Quality Management (TQM), Organizational Strategic Management, and Training and Development. These strategies are based on the concept of a 'lean' government, which means a government that is run in partnership with all stakeholders, whose focus is on promoting the advancement of the private sector and citizens through a well-managed policy and regulatory environment.

6.1 Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management technique that emphasizes high-/ quality service (Performance-Oriented Civil Service) and customer satisfaction (Customer-Driven Government). TQM entails the constant improvement of product or service quality and reliability, combined with shorter and more reliable response times through the production and sales chain or service-provision process. It also involves increasing flexibility of response to customer requirements and a constant concern about efficiency through waste elimination, the removal of duplication of effort, and curtailing overlaps of roles and responsibilities.

Management commitment is the sine-qua-non for a successful TQM strategy. TQM will not be successful without line management ownership, active involvement and leadership by example. The commitment of ministers and senior officials has been identified as a major influence on implementing successful public service reforms. Such commitment must involve a willingness to indicate a clear preference for a better future and also entail the willingness to take responsibility, and to accept praise and blame.

Performance-Oriented Civil Service

One solution that has been proffered for the problems of inadequate resources and the increasing demand for effective services, low levels of public trust, and increasing demand for accountability in government, is termed performance-oriented civil service. Performance-based management requires that managers develop a reasonable level of agreement on programme goals and strategies for achieving these goals. Managers should develop performance measurement systems to document performance and support decision-making. This performance information is then used for managing the organizations and programmes and also for providing feedback to key stakeholders on improved performance.

The key components of performance-based management are:

- Developing a reasonable level of agreement on mission, goals and strategies for achieving the goals;
- Implementing performance measurement systems of sufficient quality to document performance and support decision-making; and
- Using performance information as a basis for decision- making at various organizational levels.

Customer-Driven Government

NPM places emphasis on serving individual customers. In applying TQM, the organization should focus on what the population (customers) want, not what administration thinks they need. To improve efficiency, productivity and integrity in the public service, efforts should be primarily focused on creating a culture of commitment to identifying and meeting customer requirements throughout organizations and within available resources. It follows that serving the customer is more important than serving the organization.

This strategy has been the main focus of reforms in Malaysia, Namibia, Singapore and the United Kingdom. The Malaysian Government has emphasized throughout the public service that the customer is paramount. The Citizens Charter (United Kingdom) provides specific targets such as hospital waiting times and train delays. Customer-driven government became formal policy in the USA in 1993 through the National Performance Review (NPR) report. The Clinton Administration used the NPR report to set a goal of "providing customer services equal to the best in business".

Transparency International (2003) has recently reported that the Mauritius Citizens Charter was designed as an aid to increasing popular awareness of corruption. The main objective was to devise and disseminate a document with guidelines that individuals can follow to prevent corruption and promote integrity. The

Charter also attempts to inform and advise the general public on the nature and forms of corruption. Central to the premise of the Charter is the imperative of making the general populace aware of its collective and individual responsibility to fight corruption.

Quality and Standards

Public sector management reforms would be incomplete without addressing the issue of the quality of products delivered to the consumers. The private sector, as the engine of growth, cannot provide satisfactory services and products without the active participation of a public sector that controls quality and standards. An example of a standards authority in Africa is the Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (QSAE). QSAE was established in 1970 to promote quality management practices as one of its central objectives. In addition to standards development, certification, metrology and testing, the vision of the organization is to be an internationally recognized quality, standards, metrology and testing organization that supports the national effort towards economic development and social progress. The Authority has a quality policy, which is committed to continuously satisfying the needs and expectations of its customers in a process of continuous improvement.

6.2 Organizational Strategic Management

Organizational Strategic Management (OSM) integrates all major activities and functions of an organization and directs them towards advancing an organization's strategic agenda. It integrates all other management processes to provide a systematic, coherent and effective approach in establishing, attaining, monitoring and upgrading an agency's strategic objectives. Given the dynamic political and institutional environment within which many public agencies operate in Africa, an effective strategic management capability is essential for maintaining or strengthening the links between the organization, external stakeholders, and managing for results (Poister and Streib 1999). African Public Service agencies need to formulate their strategic plans and use the plans as a basis for effective public service management.

Policy Management

Policy management is the process of policy initiation, analysis, formulation, approval, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the public sector. Policy analysis skills have been identified as a key weakness within the civil service in many developing countries, particularly Africa. In Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Zambia, this has been addressed by strength-

ening the Offices of the President/Prime Minister/ Cabinet through the creation of Policy Units. In Ghana and Malaysia, inter-ministerial committees have been set up for special policy issues, supported by national forums involving the private sector.

The new culture of policy management emphasizes participation, accountability and transparency. It hinges upon the involvement of the private sector and civil society in policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, and on the recognition that all stakeholders in the policy development process must be involved in order to enhance support and ease of implementation.

Some of the main features of policy management include:

- Conducive policy environment, which implies trust on the part of policy makers and avoidance of over-emphasis on confidentiality, among others;
- Organizational and institutional infrastructures that can co-ordinate the various policies of government; and
- Policy analysis capacity.

Stakeholder involvement

Public services cannot expect to serve their clients and customers effectively without their full involvement in policy initiation, analysis and formulation. The stakeholders in the public service include:

- The private sector, including the informal sector
- Professional Associations and Trade Unions
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Regulatory Bodies
- Multinational corporations
- International Financial Institutions
- International Development Institutions
- Foreign Government and Agencies

In the twenty-first century, citizens and other stakeholders are demanding to be heard with greater frequency. The development of partnerships with these stakeholders is therefore paramount to effective formulation and implementation of public sector reforms and strategies for public service delivery. If the ultimate goal of the public sector is to satisfy the needs of the population, then any credible programme should ensure that it represents the interests of the people.

Gergis (1999) has dwelt on the need to empower and engage relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process in Botswana. Citizen economic empower-

ment is defined as a socio-economic process through which the Botswana people are motivated to enhance their belief in self-efficacy, to improve their abilities to control their own resources, and to unleash their creative and productive energies to achieve sustainable improvement in their living standards. Effective empowerment requires multilateral communications and two-way power relations among government, policy makers, private sector organizations, and other civil society organizations at the international, national and local levels. Gergis concludes by stating that the involvement of stakeholders will increase the transparency and accountability of any process.

Adequate Resource Utilization

Poor productivity and lack of efficiency in African public services is, in most cases, attributable to inadequate allocation and utilization of human, financial and material resources; shortcomings in management practices; and poor planning and budgeting. The key concern for reform programmes, therefore, is how to increase efficiency and effectiveness. The concern for efficiency underpins many reform programmes in Africa and rests on the fact that inefficiency within government organs leads to decreased national productivity. Therefore, the civil services need to be refocused towards clear lines of financial, managerial and fiscal accountability.

6.3 Training and Human Resource Capacity Building

Any framework for reshaping attitudes of government officials must involve staff training and development. Traditionally, training programmes have had a skills-based focus, but recent trends in customer-oriented civil service require an attitudinal-focused training. This has led to the need for a pragmatic approach to training and development so as to develop the capacity of public servants for improved service delivery. The government has to invest in public servants in order to:

- Equip managers with the necessary skills to handle new responsibilities;
- Develop skills for customer oriented civil service;
- Improve the standards of service delivery; and
- Adapt to new technologies and new working techniques, methods and process.

Capacity Building Needs of the Public Sector

The Public Service, despite its limitations and constraints, still remains the only acceptable instrument for the implementation of government policy, and is there-

fore critical for the realization of government goals and development objectives (Fourth Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers, 2003). The public sector must create an appropriate and conducive environment for the efficient and effective performance of other sectors such as the private sector, NGOs and civil society. The public service plays a central role in enabling the achievement of development goals. Governments should therefore continuously seek new and better ways to build service institutions that have the capacity to champion and advance the course of development.

Efforts at capacity building involve investments in human capital, institution building and process improvement. The broad objectives of the various initiatives should be the development of human and material resources to analyze, plan, implement and monitor programmes, which have a positive impact on national development. These efforts should be initiated to create the framework for the identification and analysis of problems and the formulation and implementation of solutions to enhance sustainable human development.

The purpose of human resource capacity building efforts are to raise the level of performance of the public sector to cope with the rising and ever-changing demands of the economy and the population. It was reported at the Fourth Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers in 2003, that specific provisions for training and personnel management have not only resulted in the enhance-ment of human resource capacity building - in terms of an increase in the number of public servants trained - but training has also changed the orientation of bureaucrats, apart from raising the level of awareness among civil servants for self-development. Other capacity-building efforts to enhance human capital develop-ment in the public sector include induction courses for newly recruited officers, and seminars/workshops for the exchange of information and experience.

One of the major challenges facing Africa is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The overall rate of HIV infection in Africa at the end of 2002 was 8.8 per cent (de Waal, 2003). While some countries have low or declining prevalence rates, in most countries it is rising. One impact of particular concern is on the public sector workforce. The reality in many African countries is that mortality among skilled personnel due to AIDS is exceeding the number that are being trained. The workforce that remains is characterized by high staff turnovers and increased absenteeism. Managing institutions while staff have shorter career trajectories and faster turnover imposes severe strains, which renders the on-going training and capacity building of the existing workforce even more essential. Other chal-lenges that need to be addressed include the shortage of local expertise in critical areas, the expansion of government activities, the growth in the size of the public service, the changing role of government, globalization and liberalization, poor service delivery and non-attainment of development objectives.

These challenges make it imperative for governments to expand formal educational institutions for human capital development. Institutions of higher learning need to be set up to fill the gap in human resource requirements of the public service. Specialized training institutions need to be established to take care of the increasing need for the acquisition of specialized skills for the administration of the public service. The recognition of the importance of training as an appropriate instrument of capacity building and utilization has been re-affirmed by the establishment of several Management Development Institutes (MDIs) in Africa.

Roles and Strategies of MDIs in Capacity building

MDIs were established in most of the African countries at independence. Their role has been to provide training, consultancy and research services to government officials. Some MDIs have had an impact on public service reforms by filling in some of the capacity gaps and making a significant contribution towards providing the human resources required by the public service, particularly in those areas and disciplines in which skilled personnel have been historically lacking.

For example, the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) has made significant contributions to public service reforms. GIMPA has organized training programmes to address the critical skills gap on the part of public servants and has also contributed to the 1983-1992 Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization Implementation Committee (PARDIC), the 1987–1993 Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP), the 1994 National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) and the 1994 Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP). In Nigeria, the creation of specialized MDIs did not only prepare new entrants for the challenges of public service employment but also upgraded the skills and knowledge of existing civil servants, which has made a significant contribution towards raising the level of management and enhancing productivity.

In general terms, however, the standard of capacity building programmes in Africa has been compromised. Over the years, the MDIs have been excluded from the centre of advice to the periphery of government administration, and in many cases they are under-performing and/or are no longer consulted about government policy decisions. In many cases, MDIs have been accorded low status, have insufficient human resources, suffer from high staff turnovers/brain-drain and receive inadequate funding. The deregulation of training in Africa has also led to the entry of unqualified trainers in the training field.

Programmes such as the Programme to Strengthen African Training Institutions (UNEDIL), sponsored by the African Development Bank (ADB), UNDP, and the World Bank, are attempting to address the underlying problems by, for example, expanding the role of MDIs to encompass consultancy and research

as autonomy to MDIs, and improving the quality of leadership (UNDP, 1995). Other activities include:

- Establishing the legitimacy of MDIs with senior government officials;

- Changing the governance of MDIs to make them more representative of an expanded client base (public and private sector) and less susceptible to direct government control (through a board or governing body);

- Exposing MDIs to the market, allowing them to charge market rates; and

- Encouraging them to develop financial strategies to reduce reliance on government and donor agencies.

Requirements for Better Human Resources Capacity Building

Given the limited success of the past human resource capacity building efforts in the public service, a number of requirements have been identified (Fourth Pan African Conference of Public Service Ministers of Public Service, 2003):

- **Adequate budgetary allocations to capacity building efforts:** Generally, in the public service, budgetary allocations for human resources development have not only been very low, but have been drastically reduced over the years. The general recommendation is to earmark 20 per cent of personnel costs for staff training. The Nigerian National Capacity Assessment Report (2000), for instance, indicates that all senior staff are expected to take a course at least once every two years.

- **Adequate funding of training/educational institutions:** Both public sector institutions of higher learning and MDIs should be funded adequately to meet the expectations of the public service. Adequate funding will enable them to maintain their facilities, and to acquire sufficient teaching and learning materials and equipment.

- **Institutional relations between public sector training institutions:** There should be a defined relationship and effective coordination between the agency responsible for implementing public service reforms and capacity building institutions. Measures for performance improvement of the public service should be factored into the training programmes of these institutions and adequately patronized. A strong formal institutional relationship between the reformed focal point and capacity building institutions is crucial in building the requisite and effective institutional capacity within the public service for formulation and implementation of appropriate strategies for public service reforms.

- **Public-Private Sector Partnership:** Forming partnerships between the private and public sector will foster the mobilization of capital, the pro-

motion of management capabilities, and the sharing of skills between sectors for managing development projects.

- **Political will and support:** Political will and support is essential for the implementation of all the dimensions of the reforms.

- **Stakeholder consultations/Ownership:** The private sector, civil society and the donor community are three of the public sector's major development partners. They have an interest in ensuring that the public service provides an enabling environment within which they themselves can operate. It is, therefore, important that the public sector provides all the stakeholders with relevant information about its activities and mobilizes them to improve public service efficiency. Involving stakeholders increases a sense of ownership of the reforms, which can help to increase the chances of successful implementation.

The need to improve public service management skills is widely recognized as an essential element of any public service reform programme. Training and capacity building is the essence of human resource development. It is the aspect of public management reform that has the potential to realize results more immediately than most other mechanisms. The logic of the centrality of training and capacity building is therefore inescapable. Government training and capacity building institutions need to be mainstreamed into the decision making process and the experts in the training institutions should be used as "think tanks" in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of national policies, strategies, programmes and projects.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This analysis of public sector reforms in Africa shows that since the 1980s, governments have been making huge efforts to improve the performance of their public sectors to meet the technological and socio-economic challenges of this era. In response to these challenges, reforms have been launched to consolidate the foundations of good governance with particular emphasis on the key institutions of the State, namely, the legislature, the judiciary, the executive and the civil service. Their ability to operate as separate entities of government working in harmony, while maintaining checks and balances, has been necessary for control. The requirement is a strong attachment to constitutional government and the rule of law.

However, the fact remains that in spite of the efforts made by African countries, the results achieved remain somewhat poor and the socio-economic situation of many African countries that have undertaken reforms has even, in many cases, deteriorated. Budgetary deficits exist and the performance of public services has not improved owing to factors such as the politicization of the civil service, coupled with by corruption and lack of accountability, which undermine not only professionalism but also competence.

Africa's efforts at modernizing its machinery of government have also been constrained by the formulation and adoption of inappropriate reforms as well as poor and ineffective implementation of the reforms. Even where reform committees/machineries have been created, many of the recommendations have not been implemented. Further, public sector reforms have taken a piecemeal approach, which has focused on the management of the public service or a specific sector to the negligence of others.

Many recent reform programmes, through NPM, aim at ensuring not only the adequate management of machineries of government, but also effective public service delivery through the building and strengthening institutional capacity, and by introducing results-oriented and total quality management techniques. The new paradigm in the delivery of services in government calls for a business approach to running the affairs of state, and requires the application of marketing and production techniques to the field of public administration. To this effect, mechanisms such as decentralization, privatization and performance management are being adopted with a view to improving the responsiveness of governments to public concerns, improving the quality of public goods and services, increasing the efficiency of service delivery and promoting accountability and ethical values.

Selected applications have shown that some African countries have recorded significant achievements in public service reforms by applying different NPM techniques, such as decentralized management, subsidiarity, performance contracting, accrual accounting and commercialization. However, despite experiences from within and outside the continent, Africa's public sector has been facing a number of challenges, which has reduced the speed of the reform process. For instance, institutional capacity, which is essential to the success of public sector reforms, is lacking or simply inadequate in many African countries. There is also a broad consensus that a deficit of ethical norms and a weak practice of accountability measures are major contributory factors to the inefficiency of the civil services and the inability of the State to manage development. The lack of transparency in the management of national affairs, coupled with inappropriate information technology, slows down the flow of information and, hence the ability of stakeholders to participate in policy formulation and decision-making.

The challenges highlighted above are surmountable, but to overcome them and lay the foundations for a lasting development, African governments should individually and collectively maintain peace and stability, which is a precondition for rebuilding confidence and providing security to the society and to investors, both national and foreign. Leaders should also show the political will and commitment to ensure compliance with the constitution, other key institutions of the State, and, above all, public sector reforms. Services provided to the citizens should be based on carefully anticipated values and priorities of the citizens as owners and consumers; and governments should conduct voters' value assessments in the establishment of priorities among competing programmes.

The changes required for the roles and institutional characters of the African State and civil service can only be realized if African socio-cultural values are taken into consideration. Working relationships need to change within and between departments to allow for the free flow of information and to remove the feeling of superiority or inferiority among colleagues. Public servants and users of services must change their attitude towards each other and towards the public. Consequently, future reform programmes should take all these factors into account when aiming to transform the structure of the African public sector.

In the light of the above challenges and preconditions, the following recommendations are made for the successful implementation of public sector reform programmes in Africa:

New Public Management Techniques

1. African public services should adopt NPM, which includes, Performance-Oriented Civil Service, Total Quality Management, Decentralization, Pay Reform, Commercialization and Customer- Driven Government;

2. Performance contracting and commercialization techniques could be recommended for the management of public enterprises that are not privatized;

3. Fundamental changes in the accounting system should be introduced, to accommodate cash accounting as well as accrual and capital charging. The concern for probity should be matched with government officials acting as public sector entrepreneurs who can fully utilize financial and material resources;

4. Governments should institutionalize a competent, efficient and accountable system of governance that offers an enabling environment for private investors. The regulatory and law enforcement functions of government need to be performed strictly to protect consumers and citizenry from unscrupulous investors; and

5. African governments should establish Work Improvements Teams (WITs) as a means of enhancing the quality of services, through increased productivity and teamwork. Governments need to emphasize reforms that enhance efficiency in the public service, value for money, financial and managerial activity.

Clearly, not all of the methods and tools outlined above will be applicable in every situation. Moreover, public sector management is mainly concerned with continuous improvement in all aspects of government work, from high level strategic planning and decision-making, to detailed execution of work elements. NPM stems from the belief that mistakes can be avoided, defects can be prevented, and waste can be eliminated. It aims to continuously improve results, in all aspects of work, through the continuous improvement of capabilities.

Capacity building

The globalization of the world economy, and the demands from client-citizens, calls for a new form of civil service and new procedures whereby the quality of services offered by public administrations are essentially put under the same scrutiny as services provided by the private sector. To respond to these requirements, the civil service should be provided with adequate material, human and financial resources.

1. African governments should now emphasize investment in developing human capital towards effective policy formulation, analysis, implementation and evaluation. Trained and highly developed personnel, complemented by political will and commitments, have become basic inputs into the realization of the public sector reform agenda in Africa;

2. Capacity building in policy management should be the priority of African governments, given that public service reforms depend on the policy

management skills of public officials. Governments should embrace a new culture of participation, accountability and transparency. All stakeholders must be involved in the policy development process for support and ease of implementation;

3. A competency-based approach to the training and development of public servants is recommended. The need to train public servants as better managers is widely recognized as an essential element of any public service reform programme;

4. African Public Service agencies need to formulate strategic plans, which should form the basis of effective public service delivery. Government should involve MDIs and allied institutions in the policy formulation process;

5. African countries should commit themselves individually and collectively to taking incentive measures focused on accelerating the return home of the vast majority of their élite and scholars who are working abroad, particularly in Europe and America.

6. Schools and universities curricula should include civic education geared towards the transformation of mentalities and instilling a business culture into citizens and public civil servants in particular; and

7. Adequate mechanisms should be established with a view to mobilizing financial resources at the local, regional, national and international levels for assessment of institutional needs and capacity building.

Decentralization

Decentralization of responsibilities in its various forms is advocated as a means of achieving public service effectiveness and ensuring that public administrations are more responsive to citizens' needs. Decentralization improves the quality of decision making through better information flows and participation of all stakeholders at the local level. In order to strengthen the capacity of decentralized agencies, substantive measures include:

1. Delegation of authority in respect of finance and personnel management to managers at lower levels within the framework of broad guidelines from the centre to strengthen field administration, and laterally from policy making units to implementing organs;

2. Empowerment of communities by strengthening local governments through the revitalization of local authorities and municipal governments;

3. Mechanisms for full participation of the private sector and CSOs in public policy formulation and decision-making should be established in order to improve local democracy, accountability, efficiency, equity, effectiveness and sustainability in the provision of social services countrywide; and

4. Providing civic training on rights and obligations (in local languages).

Enhancing local financial management

1. The establishment of tools that will help to develop the financial management of the local authorities is a key element, as are analytical tools to backstop appropriate appraisal. Sound management and transparency in local financial systems should also be encouraged;

2. Establishing a civil service and the training of municipal management personnel, particularly municipal tax collectors, should become a priority. This must be centred on local accounting, local budgeting, financial analysis and local tax systems; and

3. It is recommended to establish a regional institution of credits to local authorities that will serve as interface between financial markets and local authorities.

Ethics and accountability in the public services may be enhanced by:

1. Fostering and promoting conditions of service that enhance professional and ethical standards;

2. Advancing and affirming sound policies on recruitment, training and public personnel management;

3. Creating, strengthening and upholding the integrity and effectiveness of public institutions of accountability;

4. Enacting, improving and effectively enforcing legal instruments, codes of conduct and regulations that promote ethics and accountability;

5. Establishing coalitions of business associations and civil society to expose and combat corruption;

6. The systematic and impartial prosecution of violators;

7. Fostering popular participation to ensure the responsiveness, accountability and transparency of governance;

8. Public reporting to encourage transparency and dialogue with the people;

9. Establishing Anti-Corruption Bills/Commissions to enforce the laws against corruption; and

10. Establishing Public Complaints Commissions or strengthening existing ones.

Partnership with CSOs and the private sector

1. The involvement of the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs and NGOs, etc.) in public sector management is now recognized worldwide. African governments should improve their relationships with these organizations, and use them as partners in development rather than adversaries;

2. Government should promote dialogue with CSOs and NGOs to reduce mutual suspicion and enhance partnership in public service delivery. To this effect, mechanisms for regular consultation and participation in policy formulation and decision-making should be established; and

3. Governments should improve partnerships with the private sector to enhance the transfer of competitive skills from the private sector to the public sector. Delivery of services can be contracted to the private sector under the marketing testing technique.

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)

It is well understood and acknowledged that applications of the New Public Management tools cannot be possible without the information and communication technologies. Indeed, the information should flow freely and timely from one institution to another and within institutions in order to be treated and analyzed for policy formulation and decision-making at all levels of management. To this effect, and given that Africa is lagging behind other continents, the following measures are recommended:

1. African countries should commit themselves individually and collectively to creating an enabling environment for the development of ICTs, including broadcasting at government, private sector, civil society organizations and international levels;

2. Government should eliminate import tariffs on ICT-related equipment and services, and identify mechanisms to encourage national or subregional manufacture of suitable ICTs equipment;

3. African governments should take necessary actions to accelerate the development of electrical power and other infrastructure related to the development of ICTs;

4. For ICTs to be most effective, access to information must be in the language most accessible to the public user. "Cyber laws" should be available to the public so that ICT systems and information stored in the systems will have the same legal validity as documents stored on paper;

5. It is the responsibility of the media as watchdog organizations to be informed and to report on the State in a constructive manner. To this effect, journalists should be trained in professional reporting skills, and mechanisms to monitor their professionalism and objectiveness should be established through codes of conduct; and

6. In order to address the problem of illiteracy, the policy and legal environment should be conducive to the development of public and private training centers. Possibilities of including computer science in school curricula of schools should be explored.

Development of indicators for measuring and monitoring public service efficiency

Most African countries do not have mechanisms to enable the efficiency of their public services to be measured and monitored. As a result, there are no comparable statistics over time or among different countries. Substantive measures include:

1. Defining a unit of government to identify and articulate its mission on the basis of a framework provided by government;

2. Setting up productivity units to monitor performance and render periodic reports to the executive, the legislature and the public;

3. Integration of organizational, personnel and financial audits;

4. Reviewing the systems of compensations to ensure that salary levels and working conditions reflect market scarcities, cost of living and the productivity of each unit of government;

5. Enhancing the capacity of civil service units for pro-active and intelligent policy analysis especially in the area of information management and policy coordination; and

6. As a continuous process, mechanisms for measuring and monitoring should be embedded in the reform programmes and projects at the early stage of their formulation and implementation.

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