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Multidisciplinary
Regional Advisory Group

REPORT OF THE 17TH ROUNDTABLE

Cairo, Egypt
2 - 5 March 1996

By:

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**UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (UNECA)
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY REGIONAL
ADVISORY GROUP (MRAG)**

**THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
AND MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)**

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Opening

The 17th AAPAM Roundtable Conference was opened on Saturday, March 2, 1996 at the Training Centre for Executives, Cairo, by Dr. Atef M. Ebeid, the Minister of Administrative Development and Environment Affairs. The Conference focused on the theme "Civil Service Reform in Africa: Past Experiences and Future Trends". The Roundtable Conference was attended by delegates from African countries and a number of International Organizations. (Annex A is the communique issued at the end of The Roundtable, while Annex B is the list of participants).

In a brief statement at the opening ceremony, Mr. Essam El Naggar, President of the Central Agency for Organization and Administration (C.A.O.A.) which co-sponsored the Conference, welcomed delegates and emphasized the importance and timeliness of the Conference theme, especially as the reform of the civil service is a pre-requisite for socio-economic development. Mr. Essam El Naggar had earlier provided a brief account of the activities of CAO A in the area of administrative reform in Egypt since its establishment in 1964 and expressed the hope that delegates would compare notes and exchange experiences on different aspects of the reform process in their countries.

In his own statement, the President of AAPAM, Mr. William N. Wamalwa, thanked the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, the Government and the People of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for hosting the 17th Roundtable Conference and for the hospitality extended to AAPAM and the delegates. He also thanked the Honourable Minister, Dr. Atef Mohamed Ebeid for personally coming to declare the Roundtable Conference open. He remarked that although this was the first Roundtable Conference to be held in the Arab Republic of Egypt, it was not the first time AAPAM was being hosted by Egypt. He recalled a number of AAPAM senior policy seminars hosted by Egypt since 1966.

Speaking on the theme of the Roundtable Conference, Mr. Wamalwa noted that one might legitimately ask why the subject of Civil Service Reform in Africa was deemed relevant. He said since its inception over thirty years ago, AAPAM had spent considerable effort, time and resources seeking ways and means to encourage reform and stimulate changes in the practice of public administration and management, with a view to improving organizational structures, institutional arrangements, personnel management, planning techniques, and training policy.

Mr. Wamalwa further remarked that in subsequent years, the civil service reform agenda in Africa expanded to include the inauguration of comprehensive programmes of public service restructuring and strengthening. He noted that the terms of reference of the review commissions established in the 1970s revealed a comprehensive perspective to reform, the goal being the enhancement of the performance of the public service as a whole (i.e. the civil service, public enterprises, local government and decentralized agencies, and in some cases, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies and the judiciary). Mr. Wamalwa

stated that despite earlier efforts at administrative and civil service reform, it was evident that by the 1980s the civil service remained grossly inadequate to meet the challenges of development management and democratic governance in Africa. Thus, the civil service in all African states expanded in size considerably at an annual rate of 5 - 15 per cent from mid-1970s. Furthermore, the role of the service had expanded beyond its human and institutional capacity. For example, the public service was called upon to engage in commercial and service-delivery functions for which it had no capacity. In order to fulfil the roles expected of the modern civil service, Mr. Wamalwa stated that radical reform of the institution was necessary.

He submitted that the African civil service of the future should be re-engineered to ensure that it operated with high level of skills, high ethical standards, and impeccable conduct. He emphasized that the processes to create such a civil service should involve inter alia the following actions:

- (a) restructuring the civil service and re-defining its functions;
- (b) promoting and defending the democratic process;
- (c) inculcating a customer-service orientation in the civil service;
- (d) encouraging decentralization;
- (e) adopting total quality management for enhanced performance; and
- (f) forming a partnership with all sectors of civil society to address issues of growth and distributive justice.

In a vote of thanks, the Deputy President of AAPAM, Dr. James Nti paid glowing tribute to the President, Government and People of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the 17th AAPAM Roundtable Conference in Cairo. He also recalled the past contributions of Egypt to AAPAM towards the achievement of its objectives. He acknowledged, in particular, the contributions made to AAPAM in its formative years by eminent Egyptians, among them, the late Dr. Fouad Sheriff. He thanked Governments and sponsoring institutions for releasing top functionaries to attend the Conference. Dr. Nti also acknowledged the contribution of donor agencies whose assistance was vital to the success of the conference.

The opening address was presented by the Honourable Minister of Public Enterprises Sector and Minister of State for Administrative Development and Environment, Dr. Atef Ebeid.

In the address, the Honourable Minister thanked the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak for agreeing to host the Roundtable Conference. He also welcomed participants to the African/Arab city of Cairo and expressed delight that the conference was holding in the ancient Egyptian capital.

The Minister noted that the Conference was timely as the subject of administrative reform was crucial to the socio-economic development of African states. He stated that the Arab Republic of Egypt would present the experience so far gained in the area of administrative reform as well as learn from other countries.

He further stated that the Arab Republic of Egypt had gone through different phases of her administrative reform and had recorded notable achievements. The Minister enumerated three phases of the reform. Under the first phase (covering the period 1982-1987), the country modernized her infrastructure, paying particular attention to the development of airports, sea-ports, rail-roads, electricity, the health and education sectors, etc. Legislations were also reviewed and revised and private sector participation in the above mentioned areas was encouraged.

Within the second phase (1987-1991), the Government implemented financial and monetary reforms, and revised legislations to that effect. The objective here was to achieve balance of payment stability and establish parity in relation to the world's major currencies. The reform during this period removed difficulties in banking operations and introduced appropriate enabling legislations.

Under the third phase (1991- to date), the country aimed to completely reform the economic structure and remove the remaining impediments to private sector participation in economic activities. Under the present arrangement, participation in economic activities of the country is open to all nationalities and there are basically no restrictions other than in military areas. That implies that foreigners and citizens were free to invest in agriculture, education, roads, the industrial sector, etc. However, the Government seeks to strike a balance between the needs and interests of foreign investors and those of citizens. This is reflected in government subsidy in such areas as bread, sugar, etc.

This phase also aims at liberalizing exports and imports, establishing economic self-sufficiency, and protecting the poor against the economic effects of reforms. Training for vocational jobs and disbursement of funds for trade and other productive ventures are also being undertaken.

In order to achieve the overall objectives of the reforms the Minister advocated that a solid programme be drawn up containing the main thrusts of those reforms. He emphasized the need to continually motivate those involved in the implementation of the reforms through equitable methods of recruitment, training, promotion based on merit and competence and just remuneration. The Minister noted the important role which information plays in the achievement of the stated objectives, and said that for that reason the country established an information data bank in 1995 to ensure and streamline the flow of information necessary for administrative reforms. The information is both local and international. The country has now embarked on what the Minister described as "Total Legislative Reforms" which aims to describe and define what services are to be provided by the state which may have some impact on the lives of citizens and also remove the remaining restrictions on private sector participation in economic activities.

The Minister expressed the view that the Roundtable Conference would come up with far-reaching recommendations which would enhance the performance of the civil service.

Plenary Session I: Content and Core Elements of CSR

The first plenary session featured two presentations. The first by Dr. Robert Dodoo, is titled "Civil Service Reform in Africa: Past Experience and Future Trends". The Second presentation was by Mr. Deogratias A. Ntukamazina under the title "Core Elements of the Tanzania Civil Service Reform: An assessment of Relevance and Impact."

Dr. Robert Dodoo's paper begins with a discussion of the crucial role of African Public Services. Against the backdrop of the poor socio-economic condition of most African states, as well as the low level of productivity and development, African leaders, were, according to him, obliged to implement stringent structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). In Ghana, the Government took the initiative in drawing up Vision 2000 spelling out strategies for accelerating economic growth and meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Dr. Dodoo addressed reasons for the decline in the performance of African public services shortly after independence. Among these are the rapid proliferation of institutions and increase in personnel, inefficient and unproductive allocation of resources, excessive bureaucratization and red-tapism, as well as corruption. Others include political instability, inadequate financial resources, and lack of training and retraining opportunities.

Dr. Dodoo noted that the earlier phase of civil service reform in Ghana had limited impact due to factors such as the failure of civil servants to define, internalize, and "own" the context and direction of reform, and, accordingly, the persistence of old management culture in spite of the new emphasis on results and productivity.

Dr. Dodoo highlighted the new approach to civil service reform in Ghana. Tagged as the Public Sector National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP), its major component is the Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP). In the view of Dr. Dodoo, the new programme aims among other things at economic growth and development, quality in service delivery, efficiency, cost effectiveness, and good governance. According to him, NIRP's objectives were consistent with the strategic orientation of Vision 2000.

In his own contribution, Mr. Ntukamazina gave a detailed account of reform efforts in Tanzania and highlighted the problems encountered in defining the content and core elements of civil service reform. He paid particular attention to the various institutional reforms undertaken before the recent shifts to macro-economic (especially, privatization and public enterprise) reform. He also described the dilemma facing the government in the area of decentralization as well as the problematic issues of deconcentration and devolution.

Participants' Comments

Following the two presentations, the participants made the following observations:

- (i) while uniformity appears as a common feature of CSR in Africa, it is necessary to take into account the conditions prevailing in each country;

- (ii) the problem of overstaffing should be tackled without jeopardising the credibility and integrity of the civil service;
- (iii) there is need to complement external donor input into the reform process with internal material and intellectual contributions;
- (iv) an institutional mechanism should be devised making it possible for African civil services to exchange information on the design, implementation, and impact of reforms;
- (v) civil service retrenchment should not be carried out unless and until proper manpower audits have been undertaken, and in any case, the transparency of the entire process should be beyond question;
- (vi) a consensus on the definition of "civil servants" should precede any action leading to the formulation of policy on the "optimum size" of the civil service;
- (vii) the training institutions which are supposed to play a major role in civil service reform are themselves in need of redynamization.

Plenary Session II: Pay and Employment Reform

The second plenary session featured two main presentations. The first, by Dr. M.J. Balogun, is based on a background document submitted to the Wage and Salary Commission of Namibia, and focuses on perspectives in pay and employment policy reform. The second presentation was made by Dr. Farouk Helmy under the title "The Management of Government Organizations in Egypt within the context of Contemporary Changes."

Dr. Balogun's paper begins with a conceptual framework tracing the relationship between pay and employment policy, on the one hand, and political, macro-economic, labour-market, and managerial factors, on the other. The paper then proceeds to examine pay and employment levels in Namibia within the context of the country's economic growth prospects. It outlines various measures aimed at achieving the objectives of a sustainable pay and employment policy not only in Namibia but also in other African countries.

Dr. Balogun's paper raises the questions whether the focus should be on short-term considerations such as pay and employment reform, or on the long-term issue of performance and productivity management. After exploring the conflicting perspectives on pay and employment - particularly, the economically-rational viewpoint stressing staff retrenchment, down-sizing, and payment of "competitive" wage, as against the politically-rational model which emphasized the "social responsibility" and employment-creation task of government - the paper sees the sustainability of reform as lying in the design and implementation of a long-term and comprehensive programme of productivity and performance management, human and institutional capacity, attitude modification, and procedure rationalization.

Dr. Farouk Helmy's Paper examines the management of government organizations in Egypt within the context of the contemporary changes. The paper identifies the key challenges which face the Egyptian government organizations and the main requirements to address these challenges. It also identifies the major dimensions of the strategies and plans which have been formulated by the Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA), the central civil service body responsible for conducting and monitoring the process of administrative development in the government sector.

Dr. Helmy sees these challenges as "national" and "international". They include shifting from a national economy to a global system, formulating free-market and privatization policies, transferring from limited technology to high technology, and achieving high levels of social and economic welfare for all citizens.

Dr. Helmy proceeds to proffer the essential prerequisites for meeting the challenges, i.e., strategic planning for identifying and drawing up long-term objectives, adopting efficient policies for directing and rationalizing the process of decision-making, systems and procedures for following up and implementation.

Dr. Helmy further spells out the roles of three organs responsible for administrative reform and development. These are the State Ministry for Administrative Development, the Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA) and the Organization and Management Units which are established in various ministries, governorates and public organs.

In this context, the CAOAs assist in adjusting and developing the organizational structures of governmental organizations, rationalizing job structures and promoting optimum utilization of manpower, ensuring justice and equal treatment in the determination of wages and in applying the principles of reward and punishment, establishing an efficient data-base to support the decision-making process in governmental units, enhancing the efficiency of the employees by giving highest consideration to training, procedure simplification, and the establishment of one-stop centres to expedite service delivery.

Participants' Comments

The participants' commented on the two presentations as follows:

- (i) the emphasis on the long-haul - i.e., on the design and implementation of a long-term performance improvement programme - will replace the existing haphazard, and retro-active approach to civil service reform with a self-sustaining reform process;
- (ii) while lethargy and laxity in civil service performance need to be met with occasional "shock treatments", tinkering with pay and employment levels will not necessarily guarantee productivity or lead to instant savings in costs;

- (iii) job evaluation is a vital instrument for aligning pay with productivity, or, at least, ensuring equal pay for substantially equal work;
- (iv) a performance related pay structure which integrates the various allowances and perquisites with the basic remuneration will not only ensure transparency in public salary administration but assist in streamlining pay, employment, and performance management decisions;
- (v) administrative reform is a continuous process, and not a once-for-all 'quick-fix';
- (vi) even when "formal" civil service reform processes have been completed, managers and administrators have a major role to play in implementing, following-up, and re-designing systems and procedures;
- (vii) the basic infrastructure for the management of change should be provided before time and resources are invested in sophisticated techniques and technologies.

Plenary Session III: Nature and Scope of Competencies in Civil Service Reform

Two papers were presented at the third plenary session. The first paper by Dr. James Nti is titled "Nature, Scope of New Competencies in Civil Service Reform." The second presentation was made by Mrs. M.F. Cupido and is titled "Nature and Scope of New Competencies in Civil Service Reform with Particular Reference to the Namibian Experience".

In the conceptual part of Dr. Nti's paper, major problems relating to the definition of 'administrative reform', 'civil service reform' as well as the difference between 'administrative change' and 'administrative reform' are highlighted. Dr. Nti defines 'reform' as "systematic process of introducing changes with the objective of improving management practices, eliminating or at least minimizing the dysfunctions in the structures and processes of an existing administrative system to make it more efficient and effective in attaining its objectives and sustaining such gains."

From the nature of civil service reform, Dr. Nti highlights two points, namely, the dynamic and unending nature of civil service reforms, as well as the variety of those reforms, as clearly illustrated by Africa's experience. Dr. Nti categorizes administrative reform efforts in Africa into three. According to him, the first generation of reforms focused on the needs and demands of sovereignty, and, as such, could be regarded as politically motivated.

The second phase of reforms resulted from the work of high-powered Civil Service Review Commissions appointed by governments in the late 60s and early 70s. They were triggered by socio-economic, ideological, and historical factors.

The third phase began in the 1980's as a result of the conditionalities imposed by the Bretton-Woods institutions as part of structural adjustment loans and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs).

Even where the objectives of reforms were the same, the approach and strategy adopted varied from one country to another. Besides, CSR does not necessarily have to be comprehensive and government-wide. It could be partial in terms of the issues addressed or the institutions subjected to critical review.

Dr. Nti further notes that the major feature of successful cases of reform is the general acceptance of the fact that reform is likely to be sustainable if leaders decide in advance where they want to go, and what steps they need to take - and in what order - to get there. It involves having a vision, formulating the grand goals in consultation with key stakeholders, and plotting and sequencing the necessary steps. The chances of such reform programmes succeeding are enhanced if they are formulated locally, albeit, with external assistance.

On the critical skills required for civil service reform, Dr. Nti suggests policy analytic, strategic planning, data collection and dissemination, management information, human resource management, financial and accounting, and change management skills. These are lacking in much of the African public services, but could be provided through institutional capacity building programmes.

In conclusion, Dr. Nti argues that reforms are more likely to succeed if the nature and scope of the reforms, and particularly, the strategy for implementing those reforms, fully reflect the peculiar conditions and circumstances of the country concerned and the availability of the resources needed.

The second paper was presented by Mrs. Capido and focused on the Namibian experience. In her paper, Mrs. Capido describes the creation of a colonial civil service in Namibia between 1964 and 1980 which was paternalistic, racial, corrupt and riddled with nepotism.

The period between 1980 and 1990 was that of 'interim government' during which South Africa, in the process of disengagement, attempted to use the civil service to perpetuate racial and tribal divisions by creating a central administration for the whites and ethnically defined, second-tier administrations for the black majority.

Independence in 1991 therefore found Namibia with a public service lacking in a national orientation. The incoming government found a plethora of administrations adhering to the ideology of apartheid. The government had to reconstitute the colonial bureaucracy and the second-tier administrations into a unified Public Service of Namibia. Inevitably the public service became bloated. Hence, the need for the reforms of 1992 entailing the rationalization of the public service.

Although a lot has been achieved, some problems remain, including how to relate to militant unions in the service.

Participants' Comments

The participants commented on the two presentations as follows:

- (i) political commitment is essential to the successful implementation of civil service reform;
- (ii) while external assistance is indispensable to the inauguration of civil service reform, the sustainability of reform measures hinges on internal leadership in the design, implementation, and monitoring of reform programmes;
- (iii) the objectives of privatization need to be clarified;
- (iv) the issue of down-sizing should be re-examined taking into account the economic and social problems facing African States.

Plenary Session IV: Measuring Impact and Results of CSR

The fourth plenary session was devoted to a comparative assessment of civil service reforms and lessons for the future. Three papers were presented and discussed.

The first paper titled "Comparative Assessment on the Impact and Result of Civil Service Reform" was presented by Mr. Abdulsalam El-Gibaly on behalf of himself and a team of researchers from the Egyptian Central Agency for Organization and Administration (CAOA).

Mr. El-Gibaly began with an introduction in which he sought to define development as perceived in Egypt in the early 1950s. He then proceeded to explain the role played by the Civil Service in the development effort with regard to effectiveness and efficiency and the need for Government to enter into production of goods and services. Over the years, however, the complexities of managing a state, and the rising expectations of an ever-increasing population exposed the weaknesses of the bureaucracy, and pointed to the need for reforms.

The Egyptian Government thus embarked on reforms whose major thrust has been to promote private sector development and divest government of its erstwhile responsibilities. As part of these reforms, the Government took the following measures:

- (a) reducing the number of legislations and merging complementary legislations;
- (b) delivering efficient services;
- (c) establishing one-stop centres for service-delivery and to enhance efficiency and effectiveness generally;

- (d) simplifying rules and procedures for service delivery;
- (e) maintaining a balance between contributions from the public and private sectors as well as protecting the society's interests;
- (f) allowing for flexibility in solutions to problems instead of rigidly applying rules to every minute problem;
- (g) encouraging and strengthening democracy and popular participation by all parties in the preparation of legislations while delegating authority for eventual implementation of such legislations to local authorities.

He concluded that, on the whole, Egypt's administrative reforms have contributed considerably to a growing awareness of the need for reforms in terms of:

- (a) organisation
- (b) development of services and
- (c) rationalisation of use of resources.

The second presentation was made by Dr. Jacques Bourgaudt, Professor of Public Administration, Department of Political Science of the University of Quebec, Canada. He spoke on the "Modernisation of the Canadian Public Administration System".

He began by cautioning that the Canadian experience in civil service reform might not have direct lessons for other countries. He pointed out that the reforms had been on for some 30 years. In the process, adequate conceptual distinctions have been established between public administration and public management.

Various roles have therefore had to be assigned to the different levels of government along the principles of subsidiarity aiming at deregulation and the effective provision of services.

This scheme requires results-oriented strategies in which the relatively "minor" roles of politicians are to be well-articulated and distinguished from those of public/civil servants who have to be held accountable for implementation activities. In this process, one would have to look for opportunities to strike a balance between increasing openness in government and bureaucratic rigidity.

Mr. Clay Wescott, made the third presentation based on a paper titled "Civil Service Reform: Lessons from Africa". He explained that his contribution was drawn from the experiences of a multilateral group which includes the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, ADB, Germany, World Bank and EEC, with the UNDP playing a coordinating role. The Working Group on Civil Service Reforms is, itself, part of a larger one overseeing the implementation of structural adjustment programmes in developing countries.

Mr. Wescott stated that the objectives of the group are basically two, namely, to draw lessons from the various experiences and design guidelines to improve donor support to Civil Service reforms in Africa. This was based on the assumption that some of the poor results from previous reform efforts had been caused by inappropriate advice from donors.

Mr. Wescott explained that the process spanned about a year and consisted of meetings held to assess field reports. Six (6) African countries had been selected for studies on the basis of the readiness of their governments to participate in the programme viz: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda.

As outputs, six country studies were to be produced along with guidelines for civil service reforms based on the six studies. The guidelines in hand address an overall approach, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and donor assistance.

On the overall approach, attention is paid to purpose and scope of the reforms to achieve improved effectiveness, raise quality of work and feasibility, rather than affordability, of the reforms.

Mr. Wescott drew attention to the need for high-level leadership commitment, and for swift use of windows of reform opportunities. At all times, governments must take the lead in reform undertakings and invite donor assistance. In that spirit, both parties must aim to facilitate each other's activities and work towards well-articulated vision and strategies known to each other. Sequencing and timing of reform activities are, in this sense, very important.

He stressed the need for donors to accept that reforms normally take a long time to bear fruit, possibly up to twenty years. He went on to draw attention to the need to strengthen some core functions in the civil service as part of reforms, e.g., ministerial restructuring, decentralization, pay, incentives and capacity building. He advised that it is important to attempt giving civil servants assurances of minimum levels of remuneration.

Finally, he recommended that policy dialogue be engaged in between governments and donors so that conditionalities are determined by mutual agreement, along with some projections for the next steps required as a consequence of, or after, the implementation of the reforms.

Participants' Comments

The three presentations elicited the following observations:

- (i) political support is essential to the success of civil service reform;
- (ii) measures designed to simplify procedures and improve service-delivery systems should be accorded high priority in civil service reform;
- (iii) "downsizing" may not necessarily lead to economies and, under certain conditions, may in fact prove costly;

- (iv) the "status quo" elements in the public service will not pass up any opportunity to block substantive change;
- (v) African governments and external donors should take steps to meet their obligations in the area of civil service reform;
- (vi) the communication gap between those who stand to gain from, and those who lose as a result of, civil service reform should be constantly bridged;
- (vii) while civil service reform goes beyond macro-economic reform, the two should be mutually reinforcing rather than mutually antagonistic;
- (viii) in building a strategic coalition for civil service reform, adequate attention should be paid to the potential contributions of members of the executive and the legislative branches of government, opinion leaders, interest groups, professional associations, and other stakeholders; and
- (ix) local resource person should play the central, leadership role in the design and implementation of civil service reform, with external consultants bringing in valuable skills, comparative experience, and, if possible, resources.

Plenary Session V: Customer-Service Orientation in CSR

Three papers were presented at the fifth plenary session. The first paper was presented by Ms Genevieve Enid Kyarimpa. According to her, the content and direction of civil service reform in Uganda had been greatly influenced by the implementation of the structural adjustment programme. It was only in recent years that attention shifted to customer relations, and the introduction of changes designed to improve service-delivery mechanisms. The main features of the new customer-orientation are:

- (i) decentralization, which has led to client-responsiveness and improved communication;
- (ii) accountability, particularly with the adoption of the 're-call' principle in Uganda;
- (iii) application of results-oriented management techniques;
- (iv) emphasis on institutional and human capacity building;
- (v) establishment of watch-dog institutions.

Ms. Kyarimpa concluded by hoping that comparative studies would be undertaken to provide guidance for future reforms.

The second paper was presented by Mr. Nabil Tawfik Hassan, the Head of Sector for Developing Government Services at the CAO. He spoke on the "Design, Implementation and Evaluation of Civil Service Reform: A Perspective on Customer Service or Citizen Charter."

He noted that there was a long history of governmental reform in Egypt going back to 1952. In all, five stages may be discerned in the reform effort, during which various aspects of government business and processes were analyzed. Several regulations have also been issued to improve the service delivery capacity of government. As is to be expected, a lot of money had been spent on the exercise. In terms of results, gains have been identified, including decentralization, improvement in work methods, establishment of integrated information system, and publication of procedure manuals. However, there have also been negative results. For instance, there has been an imbalance in the allocation of resources, and inadequate allocation for installation and maintenance of systems and procedures.

It is recommended that research be undertaken to support reform. Seminars should also be organized to inform the public. In pricing public services, the actual cost must be used to reduce the burden on the state budget. As much as possible, government services must be privatised. However adequate safeguards must be provided to protect the interest of society and of public employees.

The last paper to be presented was that of Nana Amma Yeboaa. She noted that the customer of the civil servant during the colonial period differs from that in the post-independence period. Unlike the past, satisfying the citizen as a customer, is the raison d'être of the existence of the civil service in an independent country and this perspective ought to guide reform effort.

Thus there is the need for change of "hearts and minds". Nevertheless, efforts at reforms have continued to serve bureaucratic interests by and large, rather than improve administrative performance to offer quality service to citizens. There is still adherence to rigid rules, unprofitable methods, and unhelpful assumptions continue to be made. Attitudinal and cultural change must therefore be a fundamental prerequisite for successful reform.

The critical issues in designing customer focused reforms should include the following:

- (i) diagnostic and stock-taking process that allows a comparison of inputs with outputs;
- (ii) deep commitment by the top leadership;
- (iii) clear-cut objectives consistent with institutional goals;
- (iv) reconciliation of the priorities of service providers with the demands of the recipients;

- (v) anticipation (at the planning change) of road-blocks to genuine reform; and
- (vi) periodic review of performance against tangible indicators.

Participants' Comments

After the three presentations, the participants made the following comments:

- (i) the public sector should adapt certain private sector concepts and practices in support of its new customer-orientation and service delivery programmes;
- (ii) the level of public sector remuneration should be raised to attract and retain high calibre personnel;
- (iii) in addition to procedure simplification aimed at enhancing the service-delivery capacity of the public service, a programme of civic education should be instituted sensitizing members of the public to their rights as recipients of public services;
- (iv) the design of organization structures should reflect the inter-dependent relationship between service producers and consumers, provide regular feedback between the two, and facilitate instant rectification of faults and redress of grievances;
- (v) a code of conduct should be an integral part of reforms designed to improve relations with customers; and
- (vi) attitude change or behaviour modification should be accorded high priority in customer-oriented reform programmes.

Plenary Session VI: Decentralization Reform

Only one paper (by Prof. Fadlalla ali Fadlalla) was presented at the sixth plenary session. The author examined decentralisation reforms in the Sudan with special focus on community participation in development.

The paper notes how superimposed bureaucratic structures and their parallel political institutions accelerate or impede community participation in development. The history of community participation in the Sudan is also provided. The Tabaldi village society (with its emphasis on free debate, freedom of choice, and equal share in outcomes) illustrates the system through which community participation was realised in the traditional society. Communal goals were set and means to implement them sought. Everybody gave according to his ability and took according to his needs.

With the Islamisation of the Sudan, the Tabaldi's populist forum was transformed into the village bureaucracy. The arrival of the British colonialists worsened the situation. The policies of direct and indirect rule created an elite class which was out of tune with the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

The Local Government Law of 1951 aimed at rejuvenating the old traditional Tabaldi system. With the fight for independence, legitimate role was sought with its elements like free and fair elections.

After independence, the 1971 People's Local Government Reform was enacted by the Nimeiry military regime. The reform liquidated tribal and communal authority regained after 1951. This reform alienated the masses for the simple reason that it undermined genuine community participation.

Other issues discussed in the paper are those of federalism and the conflicting positions taken on it by the North and the South, the impact of military coups on community participation, and prospects for the establishment of a local government system that is genuinely representative of the people's will, and that is accountable, service-oriented, and responsive.

Participants' comments

The participants focused on measures aimed at entrenching democracy and strengthening democratic processes and institutions in Africa. Local government and decentralization were targeted as the principal means of achieving the objective.

Plenary Session VII: Public Enterprise Reform and Privatization

The Seventh Plenary Session featured three papers. The first, by Prof. Gatian F. Lungu, is titled "Public Service Reforms in Africa: Lessons from Experience". The second presentation was by Dr. Shamsudeen Usman and titled "Public Enterprise Reform in

Nigeria", while the third one was by Dr. Atef Ebeid and titled "Public Enterprise Reform in Egypt".

In his paper, Prof. Lungu notes that despite the high expectations that occasioned the creation of PEs in post-independent Africa, their performance has consistently remained poor, hence the need for reforms. He added that disenchantment with PEs as under-achievers came not only from governments but also from international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF. The thrusts of the reforms, the paper argues, were to increase efficiency, reduce the "twin" burdens of fiscal deficits and external debt, and stimulate the expansion of competition in the economy by reducing the monopoly powers of some public enterprises.

On the impact of the reforms so far, the paper notes that the process has been slow and that the overall impact of various measures to revitalise African economies under the reforms remained to be seen.

The paper further observes that public enterprise reform in Africa had set in motion several developments aimed at revitalizing African economies, though initial results point toward losses, social dislocations, and the under-development of the private sector.

The second paper by Dr. Shamsudeen Usman is based on the author's experience as a main actor in the public enterprise reform process in Nigeria. The paper begins by examining the antecedents to public enterprise reform in Nigeria. It notes that the original objectives of setting up public enterprises in Nigeria were generally sound; and that up to mid-1970's most of the enterprises achieved operational efficiency, financial viability and good quality of service.

However, by the late 1970s, the public enterprises started to encounter problems, as a result of the following factors, among others:

- poor recruitment practices;
- inadequate training;
- poor record keeping;
- poor productivity;
- excessive bureaucratization;
- lack of strategic planning, etc.

The paper argues that these and other factors led to the need to reform the public enterprises so as to achieve efficiency and increase productivity.

On the scope and coverage of Nigeria's public enterprise reform programme, the paper states that privatisation was made an integral part of Nigeria's home-grown Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). A Technical Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation (TCPC) was set up in 1988 to oversee and implement the Government's policy on privatisation and commercialisation. The paper further notes that in Nigeria, there were four categories of privatized enterprises, namely, those ear-marked for:

- (a) full privatisation;
- (b) partial privatisation;
- (c) full commercialisation; and
- (d) partial commercialisation.

Five methods of privatization were adopted, viz: Public Offer of Shares through the Nigerian Stock Exchange; Private Placement; Sale of Assets of Enterprises judged to be unviable; Management Buy Out and Deferred Public Offer.

The paper finally assesses Nigeria's success with public enterprise reform and notes that, so far, much has been achieved, although there is still room for improvement, especially in the area of commercialisation where results have been mixed.

The third paper was presented by Dr. Atef Ebeid, the Minister of Public Enterprise Sector and Minister of State for Administrative Development and Environment. His presentation is titled: "Privatization: the Egyptian Experience".

Dr. Ebeid's paper seeks to draw lessons from the Egyptian and other privatization experiences. These practical lessons should not be considered less important than theoretical principles since (the lessons) they provide decision-makers in countries that have not yet embarked upon the process of privatization with the main conceptual foundations and the structures which may support their efforts.

The paper also outlines the procedures which Egypt had so far adopted, and describes its notable achievements. According to Dr. Ebeid, privatization in Egypt started in 1990 and passed through several stages. These include:

- (a) An extensive effort aimed at the development of awareness and change of culture of the senior level management in the public sector, in the academic community, and in the general public.
- (b) The establishment of appropriate organizational arrangements to implement privatization.
- (c) Providing the necessary legal backing.
- (d) Classification of various enterprises into categories, e.g., those to be privatized, those to be restructured, and those to be liquidated, based on valuation; and
- (e) Implementation of privatization programme.

According to Dr. Ebeid, the Egyptian effort has so far been successful although the process of privatization is a continuous one.

Participants' Comments

The participants raised a number of issues on the three presentations. Among these are the following:

- (i) Will privatization succeed in the fragile economic environment of Africa?
- (ii) Is the shift to market economy in the interest of the poor people of Africa?

- (iii) What are the major problems of privatisation? Instead of selling shares to individuals, why can't the Government use holding companies in implementing privatisation measures?
- (iv) Is it not possible to have successful government-owned companies in Africa?
- (v) How will privatisation and commercialisation take care of essential services such as electricity and water?
- (vi) How do we ensure that the public assets being privatised or commercialised do not fall into the hands and control of the rich few, since the majority of the citizens do not have the resources to buy such assets?
- (vii) What is the relationship between privatization and civil service reform? Can we also privatise the civil service?
- (viii) Can we divorce privatisation from politics?
- (ix) Governments should adopt deliberate policies to ensure that the shares of privatised or commercialised enterprises are equitably distributed amongst the citizenry;
- (x) Governments should not abdicate their social responsibilities to their citizens under the guise of privatisation/commercialisation;
- (xi) Civil Service reforms are an integral aspect of public sector reforms and public officers should be educated to help to realise the objectives of the reforms;
- (xii) Public enterprise reform must be inward-driven and not imposed from outside;
- (xiii) The content and speed of privatisation reform should be left to each country to determine;
- (xiv) Privatisation/commercialisation are political issues and good governance is a pre-requisite for their success.

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE 17TH ROUNDTABLE
OF THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The 17th Roundtable of the African Association for Public Administration and Management was held under the patronage of the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E. President Mohamed Hosny Mubarak, between 2nd and 5th March 1996 at the Training Centre for Executives, Cairo. It was formally opened by the Minister of Administrative Development and Environment Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dr. Atef M. Ebeid.

2. Focusing on the theme "Civil Service Reform in Africa: Past Experiences and Future Trends", the Roundtable examined the progress attained and the problems encountered by various African countries in designing, implementing, and evaluating reform programmes. The host country Egypt, in particular, availed participants the benefits of its experience in the area of organization and management improvement.

3. Based on the discussions which took place at plenary sessions and in syndicate groups, the Roundtable outlined a set of conclusions focusing on four main areas of concern viz:

- a) Approaches to the design, implementation and Evaluation of Civil Service Reforms;
- b) Options and Strategies in Pay and Employment Reform;
- c) Privatization and Public Enterprise Reform; and
- d) Capacity Building Strategies for Customer-Oriented Civil Service Reform.

Approaches to Civil Service Reform

4. The Roundtable noted from the country experiences that the benefits of civil service reform tended to be limited by the inadequate attention paid at the early, preparatory stages of reform to the content and core elements of reform programmes; the links between civil service reform, on the one hand, and governance reform, on the other; the methodology of, the institutional prerequisites for, the design, inauguration, and evaluation of reform schemes; miscellaneous change management problems, and the issue of sustainability.

Pay and Employment Policy Reform

5. An equally important sub-theme which generated lively discussions at the Roundtable is that of pay and employment policy reform. While endorsing the broad hypothesis that pay and employment policy is, or should be, closely related to the prevailing macro-economic conditions, opinions varied as to how to respond to the consequences of the symbiotic relationship.

6. While a school of thought cautioned against wholesale application of supply-side or free-market concepts to public administration, the prevailing view at the Roundtable held that Africa's public sector could not afford to be oblivious to the need to rationalize pay and employment levels, bearing in mind the increasingly hostile international economic environment, and the consequences of a bloated civil service for macro-economic stability and self-sustaining growth.

7. The question of what constituted the optimal size of the civil service received the attention of participants at the Roundtable. The consensus which emerged is that earlier rationalization schemes tended to approach the question from a purely economic angle, and failed to pre-face civil service retrenchments with adequate personnel and skills needs assessments.

8. While recognising that affordability remained an essential consideration in civil service pay, the Roundtable saw the need to evolve, over a period of time, a remuneration structure which besides, raising morale, would go a long way in addressing the attitudinal and ethical problems facing the civil service, and in enhancing public sector productivity.

Privatization and Public Enterprise Reform

9. The Roundtable noted that a number of countries had embraced the privatization doctrine without critically examining the underlying assumptions, and unmindful of the policy, legal, institutional, managerial and attitudinal adjustments which such an option dictated.

10. According to the Roundtable, the case for privatization rests wholly on its capacity to streamline resource allocation processes, eliminate distortions in micro-and macro-economic decisions, and, generally, enhance an economy's growth chances. When viewed this way, privatization seemed to respond in a meaningful and substantial manner to the issues of waste, extravagance, and, at times, corruption, which for several years dented the image of the public sector.

11. The Roundtable acknowledged experiences in some countries which underscored the positive outcome of privatization. Specifically, the policy was seen to have contributed in some countries to macro-economic stability, rising GDP growth rates, increase in rural income, and elimination of distribution bottlenecks.

12. However, the Roundtable was of the view that when held to litmus tests - notably, accountability, transparency, poverty alleviation and social equity tests - privatization was not without its negative side. The Roundtable further noted that while the public sector was often called upon to bear certain costs (e.g. law and order, environmental health, and infrastructural development costs) the returns most frequently accrued to the private sector. Besides, the "efficiency" and "productivity" of the latter were liable to be over-sold.

13. The Roundtable observed that even where privatization appeared as a viable option, not enough attention was paid to what was needed to make it succeed - e.g. the revision of

statutes governing contractual relations and ownership of assets, the establishment of capital markets and stock brokerage institutions, the provision of law enforcement and judicial infrastructure as well as adequate security cover, and the development of human and institutional capacity.

14. With specific reference to the issue of commercialization, the Roundtable was of the view that its success as an option in public enterprise reform hinged on the capacity and the will of government leaders to inculcate management and financial discipline, foster in the rank-and-file a spirit of industry and organizational alertness, and take measures to combat laxity, indifference, and slovenly work habits.

Capacity Building Strategies for Customer-Oriented Civil Service Reform

15. In the view of the Roundtable, citizen satisfaction is the most reliable yardstick for measuring the impact and results of civil service reform programmes. Yet, it seemed to have received the least attention in previous and contemporary reform drives. Up to now, emphasis appears to have been placed on the "bold and the dramatic" aspects of reform - the "big" issues such as civil service size and cost, the review of policy management and institutional capacity, the installation of "modern" information (including computer-aided) systems, and the introduction of Total Quality Management processes and techniques. Little has been done to pull together all the reform measures with a view to assessing their impact on the quality, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness of the services demanded by the citizen.

16. The Roundtable noted the immense opportunities presented by civil service reform programmes to eliminate internal bottlenecks to service-delivery, and to expose systems and procedures to external evaluation.

17. The Roundtable identified some of the internal constraints on service-delivery, e.g. lack of, or failure to enforce, time and performance standards, retention of antiquated and/or defective performance evaluation instruments, maintenance of multiple decision centres, implementation of cumbersome and time-consuming procedures, and constant violation of time-and-motion principles.

18. The Roundtable further observes that progress in effecting internal improvements tended to proceed faster in civil service systems which fostered a culture of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, than in those which severed relations with the external environment.

II. Recommendations

19. Proceeding from its various conclusions, the Roundtable agreed on the following recommendations:

- (i) the objectives of civil service reform and the relationship with other (especially, macro-economic and governance) reform objectives should be clarified at the initial stages;

- (ii) reform should not be confined to the civil service but should be extended to sectors whose operations affect, or are affected by, the work of the civil service;
- (iii) the SWOT technique of analysis (focusing on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) should be applied to identify the broad thrusts and core elements of civil service reform;
- (iv) an institutional framework comprising a Change Management Team and project task forces should be established to plan, implement, and review change-oriented projects;
- (v) the stake-holders must be closely involved in the activities of the Change Management Team, and transparency should be the Team's guiding principle;
- (vi) the managers of the civil service reform process should establish performance indicators for each reform project;
- (vii) customer satisfaction should be the primary objective of civil service reform, and the major indicator of the success of reform efforts;
- (viii) the resources needed in formulating, implementing, and evaluating civil service reform projects should be properly budgeted, allocated and accounted for;
- (ix) the civil service remuneration policy should be based not only on the principle of affordability, but should also reflect the concern for enhanced morale and productivity, and high ethical standards;
- (x) civil service employment levels, and by, implication, the size of the civil service, should be determined after a thorough and systematic assessment of the responsibilities of government and the corresponding personnel and skills requirements of the civil service;
- (xi) where down-sizing and retrenchment appear as the only feasible option, measures should be instituted not only to cushion employees against the option's negative effects, but also to assist in re-settling displaced civil servants in gainful occupations;
- (xii) pay and employment reform should be supported with a new performance management system focusing on the establishment of performance standards, performance evaluation, and productivity measurement;
- (xiii) while the civil service remains a major agent of stability and continuity in society, individuals whose performance constantly fall short of expectations should be separated;

- (xiv) the false dichotomy between public and private sector-led growth should be replaced by a development paradigm highlighting the symbiotic relationship between, and the inter-dependence of, both sectors;
- (xv) the content and pace of privatization programmes should reflect the objective conditions prevailing in each society;
- (xvi) privatization should be assessed on the basis of its contributions to macro-economic stability, poverty eradication, distributive justice and social equity;
- (xvii) the issue of transparency of the divestiture process should be accorded greater attention than it has so far received;
- (xviii) privatization programmes should become increasingly gender-sensitive;
- (xix) the commercialization option in public enterprise reform should be explored, and the chances of its success enhanced by a sustained campaign against extravagance, corruption, and slovenly work habits;
- (xx) the legal, institutional and management environment should be brought in line with the objectives of privatization and commercialization;
- (xxi) the capacity of public service institutions to serve their customers should be enhanced through systematic improvement of internal management and work-flow processes, the establishment of one-stop decision centres, rigorous enforcement of time and performance standards, the conduct of consumer surveys, the establishment of public complaints desks or "hot-lines", the introduction of incentive schemes, and the training of staff;
- (xxii) a computer-aided information system should be established to enable the civil service to monitor the impact of reform measures;
- (xxiii) African civil services should instal e-mail facilities to enable them to be linked with their overseas peers, and facilitate exchange information on approaches to, and the impact of, civil service reform.