African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM)

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY ARCHITECTURES FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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1. Introduction

■ Much optimism pervades the continent today, especially in terms Africa's comparatively strong macroeconomic performance

■ However, given the challenges of high poverty levels, poor quality education, and high rates of youth unemployment,

■ The extraordinarily heavy burden that lies on the comparatively few competent, inspired and hardworking Africa public administration managers is not enviable by anyone in the know

Introduction (contd)

Everywhere today, a gap exists in the competencies as well as the dynamism of private sector managers and public administration managers, and with profound implications:

"In the wake of the global financial crisis, there is a consensus that the world needs good regulators to ensure that it the financial sector serves society in a way that it should and does not wreck havoc. But it is not easy task: regulators need to be *smart enough* to understand the market's complexities and not be captured by its easy nostrums, *devoted enough to public service* that they accept earning a pittance compared with someone of their talents could make in the private sector, *strong enough to resist* the lobbying pressures from the financial sector, *honest enough* to resist its enticements and politically astute enough to manage a politics charged with money" former World Bank Vice-President and economics Nobel Laureate, Joseph Stiglit, Time Magazine, April 29-May 26

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2. Legacy institutional and policy architectures

Derived from adaptation of a classical triad of public performance and accountability:

- A sovereign people (citizens) who elect leaders and in return expect to receive services

- Elected leaders who are accountable to the people through appropriate policies and programs, delivered by public administrators they have appointed

- Appointed public administrators who are accountable to: (i) the sovereign people through delivery of services, and (ii) the elected leaders by implementing policies and programs

Legacy institutional and policy architectures

- A unified public administration that served all branches of government, as well as the watchdog and oversight organs.

- Minimal decentralization of roles and functions from the central (national) government

- The legislation and regulations governing the public administration was generally simple and readily discernable in the constitution, a civil service act, public service orders, circulars and gazette notices

- Through the public administration, all arms of government, except the military and state corporations were readily and effectively coordinated

From Legacy to Reforms-Driven Architectures

Dimension of the Architectures	Legacy Architecture	Reforms-Driven Architectures
Constitutional framework of government	• One strong national (central) government • Three arms of government and oversight organs served by a unified public service • Minimal decentralization to lower level (local) governments • A Public Service Commission • Auditor General	• One strong national (central) government • Different arms of government served by independent segments of "public administration" – PSC, Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC 2), Judicial Service Commission (JSC), autonomous administrations of each constitutional organs (as many as 15 in the 2010 Kenya constitution) • Weak local governments: decentralization by deconcentration to devolution
Legislative framework	• Single Public Service Act and Pensions Act	• Multiple and fragmented legislative regimes
Regulatory framework	• Based on the roles and functions of MDAs; • Issued by public service orders and circulars	• Many regulatory functions hived-off MDAs and new agencies established • Plethora of pieces of legislation and regulations
Policy making and implementation framework	• Clear separation of political and public administration roles and functions • Policy-making by Ministers through the Cabinet • Policy formulation and implementation by Public Administration	• Increasingly blurred delineation of political and administrative/technical roles and functions • Policy-making by ministers (the executive) at both National Government and local governments (for decentralized roles and functions) • Stakeholders' and general citizenry participation in policy formulation
Service delivery system	• Centralized and monolithic • Publicly funded	• Decentralized and pluralistic • Multi-faceted private sector participation (privatized, contracted, PPPs, etc) • Increasing private sector funding

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Distinguishing features of the evolving architectures

1. Institutional pluralism – plethora of institutions and rainbow of stakeholders participate in what was previously the roles and mandates of a unitary Government, with a unified public service delivered often with monolithic models

2. Decentralization – from deconcentration to devolution to lower level governments

3. The promises and challenges of new architectures

The promises	The challenges
• Enhanced democratic governance (both popular and stakeholders' participation)	• Populism, patronage and corruption opportunities expanded • Resistance of central government executives to hive-off or decentralize services
• Improved decision making at local level	• Sub-optimal and skewed decision-making
• Enhanced aggregate capacity for public service delivery	• Gap between public administration capacity to guide and regulate the multiplicity of actors
• Expanded public service delivery	•Varying standards in service delivery
• Fiscal relieve as non-state actors, lower level governments contribute to funding and delivery of services	• Private sector takes advantage of public assets and facilities for private gain (as in contracts, PPPs, etc)
Improved public service delivery	•Fragmentation and poor coordination of public service delivery • No significant improvements in service

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The challenges of new architecture: US learns from the 9/11 Episode

A "large, unwieldy US Government" progressively undermined the capability of the Government to share information and coordinate a strategic and effective response to terrorist threats over the years

From: Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Why the evolving architectures are not delivering

- ■ The challenges already identified

- ■ "Me-tooism" that pervades New Public Management initiatives in Africa

- ■ Fragmentation and weak coordination of policy making, service delivery and regulation

- ■ Failure to address comparatively low pay and incentives for public administration workers – no retention and motivation, and a widening gap between the capacity of private sector managers and public service managers and regulators

- ■ Failure to tackle nepotism and corruption as a priority

From Reforms to Transformation: The Imperatives

1. Visionary and committed leadership
2. competent and committed indigenous public administration leadership
3. Getting the basics right
4. Fair and adequate pay for public administration personnel
5. Modernization of human resources management
6. Getting the transformation strategy right
7. Keep it simple and flexible
8. Accelerate ICT implementations to rapidly improve coordination of Government

The transformational institutional and policy architecture: Foundation and pillars

- The appropriate foundation – see the imperatives

- Comparatively smaller but stronger and more effective public administrations;

- Rationalized institutional pluralism;

- Principled relationship between public administration officers and political leaders

- Institutionalized meritocratic practices and professionalism

THANK YOU