Quality Leadership for Efficient and Effective Management of Public Service in Africa

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This book emanates from the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) 35th Roundtable Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 18th – 22nd November 2013 under the theme “Quality Leadership for Efficient and Effective Management of Public Service in Africa”.

From the deliberations and presentations in the conference, it was evident that Africa is a continent blessed with vast and valuable resources that if well harnessed and utilised could boost development to greater levels. It was emphasised that quality leadership is pivotal to development in the African nations. The continent’s potential could therefore be optimally realised through leadership that can stimulate innovation and sustain stewardship in the management of resources.

While it is true that there has been visible progress in service delivery across the continent, much more needs to be done if the continent is to realise its goals. The conference illustrated that lack of quality leadership continues to reduce the continent to a vicious circle of development redundancy.

This book therefore, concentrates on the importance of quality leadership. Through practical and theoretical lenses, the book explores leadership experiences, strategies and systems with an aim of fostering quality leadership in the continent. Africa needs to embrace a leadership that nurtures and sustains reforms, professionalisation and modernisation of the African public service. The book captures various observations, experiences and case studies detailed by different authors drawn from across Africa.

As I conclude, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the editors, Mr. George K. Scott and Prof. Malcolm Wallis who have endlessly reviewed this book. I also acknowledge the priceless contribution of the AAPAM Secretariat who have successfully steered this book project.

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Finally, it is my humble submission that we all may learn from the experiences and knowledge captured in this book.

Dr. Roland Msiska
AAPAM President
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EDITORS’ INTRODUCTION

George K. Scott and Malcolm Wallis

Apart from the 35th AAPAM Round-table Conference (RTC) in 2013, the association has in the past organised for forums to deal with issues of quality in the public service. In 1999, the association held a Round-Table Conference in Kampala, Uganda under the theme “Quality Management Assurance in Africa”. Most of the AAPAM programmes are indeed focused on the betterment of public service with a reference to service delivery.

There have been other RTCs where issues related to quality have been aired. For example, in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2006, presentations were made on quality service and accountability and on what citizens say about service delivery, the latter reporting on the very important and relevant ‘Afrobarometer’ project which surveys public attitudes to government, clearly an exercise of some interest and relevance for participants and public services in general (AAPAM 2006: 16-19). At the same forum, the Vice-President of the host country, His Excellency Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein spoke about quality in his opening speech. He observed that, ‘the quality of public service delivery in Tanzania, although improving, is still unacceptable’. He went on to commit the government he was then serving to a reversal of this (AAPAM 2006: 91).

Thus, the 2013 theme ‘Quality Leadership for Effective and Efficient Management of Public Service in Africa’ is an extension of an issue which has recurred within AAPAM circles for at least two decades. What has emerged over the years is that quality management and leadership can be seen both as a technical and somewhat specialised concern on the one hand, whilst on the other hand, it has tended to be viewed as an all-embracing concern on how well governments are performing on quality matters. The term thus can be used to analyse such apparently very different issues as the performance of a country’s head of state and the standard of the water supplied to a remote village. Both are quality matters which can be included within this broad framework. The 2013 RTC reflected a little of this diversity as this introduction will endeavour to demonstrate.

LEADERSHIP AND QUALITY: UNDERSTANDING THE KEY WORDS

Both these terms need clarification from the beginning as they often cause uncertainty, more so because they were key terms used within the RTC. While the meaning of the term leadership is often seen as relatively clear in the governance context, it still needs some elaboration. It is a somewhat more difficult story when it comes to defining quality. Both these terms defy the concise definitions which can be found in