

## AIDE MEMOIRE

# 41<sup>ST</sup> ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE OF THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)

AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND  
MANAGEMENT (AAPAM)



ASSOCIATION AFRICAINE POUR  
L'ADMINISTRATION PUBLIQUE  
ET LE MANAGEMENT (AAAPM)



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



Republic of South Africa

### THEME:

AFRICA'S RENEWAL IN THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: SHARED  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS

**VENUE: University of the Western Cape, Cape Town,  
South Africa**

**DATE: 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

## INTRODUCTION

1. In his compelling renaissance thesis, former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, singles out democratisation of inherited institutions as an important cornerstone of the African renaissance as he understood that no meaningful development can accrue without first building viable institutions. He also understood that the project of building institutions is a shared responsibility among and between social partners and global players. Mbeki recited his message thus:

*"Thus to this dream of an African renaissance, of the sustained development of our country and of our continent, requires the renewal of the institution of traditional leadership ... for this democracy to continue strengthening and to have in place systems and institutions that will help bring about a better life for all our people, no matter where they reside, each one of us would have to be guided by the best interests of these very people ... the cohesive efforts of our entire society is needed to enable Africa to face the legacy of the colonial and neo-colonial past and to face the challenges posed by the new millennium."*

2. The Mbeki Renaissance thesis lays a veritable framework for institution's levers in the era of sustainable development more particular with regard to governance and public administration. This thinking raises important questions of how Africans can recognise and respond to the call for the "Africa We Want" in a way that is authentic to who we are? How can African Member States intentionally plan for a sustainable institutional future? What do the new realities within which Africa exists mean for how its Member States structure and deliver efficient and effective services to their citizens and how can this be rendered as a shared responsibility?

## BACKGROUND TO THE 41<sup>ST</sup> AAPAM ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE

3. Preparations for the 41<sup>st</sup> AAPAM Annual Roundtable Conference are taking place in the backdrop of a global pandemic that has ravaged the world for the past two years. The COVID-19 pandemic is, without a doubt, the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge since World War II. The global spread of the virus overwhelmed health systems disrupted the global economy and led to widespread social disruption. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 pandemic a public health emergency of international concern proving countries the basis to institute a range of

disaster management interventions to slow the spread and save lives. These measures negatively impacted activities of multilateral institutions like AAPAM which was forced to suspend most of its training programmes together with the prime-time Roundtable Conference.

4. Combined concerted efforts of testing, preventative protocols and patient treatment has helped countries to contain the lethal effect of COVID-19 wherefore normalcy is slowly but surely returning to public life. The two devastating years have shown that COVID-19 is more than a public health issue. The pandemic has left in its wake a traumatized society with deep scars on the health, social, economic and political arenas. For some yet to be explained reason, Africa largely escaped the severity of the Pandemic contrary to the Armageddonian outlook most pundits had predicted. This notwithstanding the fact that Africa has, to date, the least vaccinated population against COVID-19. With the dark COVID-19 clouds now receding, it is time the AAPAM RTC reconvenes to reflect, recoup, take stock and reset in readiness to confront the myriad challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on African and the World.

## THE AFRICAN INSTITUTION BUILDING CONTEXT

5. ***African institution-building project*** outlined measures that Member States took in response to various challenges. In 2002, Africans transformed the OAU into the AU, complete with a framework for the development of the continent's governance architecture. This led to the subsequent establishment of the AU organs and relevant structures to sustain peace and security issues including African Union Peace and Security Council, Continental Early Warning System, Panel of the Wise, African Standby Force, and the AU Peace Fund among others. The AU Member States had revitalized their economic integration initiatives through the Abuja Treaty and had sought institutionalised strategic partnerships with the United Nations and other global players. All these efforts pointed to a desire for a comprehensive approach to state-institution-building, bearing in mind the African countries' national development strategies and specificities.
6. As a result, the importance of long-term national capacity development through institution-building, human resource development and confidence-building among the national actors, were found to be key to achieving sustainable development. Reinforcing this construct, former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon reflected those nurturing institutions that were inclusive, transparent, effective and accountable was not easy, but they were the cement

that bonded states and citizens even though the journey, sometimes, takes decades to accomplish. This is why Japan, for example, a significant African development partner, has prioritised support for institution-building, capacity-building for people running institutions and building trust. For states to create sustainable institutions, a great amount of innovation is indispensable which necessitates ample room for expanded use of science and technology and hence the centrality of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution.

7. In times of nation-wide severe crisis, such that precipitate by COVID-19, people look up to the state and its institutions as protector, provider, defender, facilitator, informer and educator, organizer, pacifier, and guarantor of the continuity of national life economically, socially, politically and otherwise. Paradoxically, it is during severe crisis that State and institutional capabilities to effectively play these relational roles gets challenged. The pandemic provides a moment for the 41<sup>st</sup> AAPAM Roundtable Conference to reflect on the capabilities of Africa's institutions to predict, identify and manage crisis in a timely manner to avert adverse effect on people's lives and livelihood.
8. Navigating the unknown caused by the pandemic requires institutions that are versatile and able to quickly adapt, innovative and able to expeditiously find solutions to emerging challenges, collaborative and able to tap potential from different actors and manned by public servants who act with humanness putting service before self to ensure continuity of service delivery and counter the disruptive effects of the pandemic. Being innovative and able to utilise modern technology are also part and parcel of institutional strengthening. Like in many other countries the pandemic is revealing institutional weaknesses and providing opportunity to review and strengthen institutional infrastructure, for example in matters of public health and social protection especially for the vulnerable.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE THEME**

9. The last decade has clarified and settled the fact that poor governance leads to dysfunctional institutions resulting in policy implementation failure. That said though, the task of reforming public institutions is a complex and difficult enterprise involving fundamental changes in the 'rules of the game' which require long-term high-level commitment, detailed knowledge, and extensive support and assistance. Redesigning and repositioning public institutions to perform optimally and deliver better services is a shared responsibility which

involves defining roles in line with economic rationale, identifying capacity needs, and restructuring to enhance performance.

10. There is no gainsaying the reality that institution building is a complex and complicated affair, one that must be rooted in national historical, political, social, cultural and economic contexts. Imposing outside models could do more harm than good. Institution-building must also be rooted in political agreement because national ownership and leadership are key to the success of this project. Successful institution-building projects carry an important dimension of shared responsibility which in essence entails a need to break down silos, to broaden the democratic space for national and local governments, civil society and related actors to work together in the long term.
11. It is due to this centrality of building sustainable institutions to realise better governance outcomes that, at the 40<sup>th</sup> AAPAM Annual Round-Table Conference, held in Cairo, Egypt, the AAPAM fraternity appropriately decided to carry forward the theme of building/strengthening African institutions to the 41<sup>st</sup> Round-Table Conference. The 40<sup>th</sup> Round-Table Conference outcomes clearly revealed that particular attention must be paid to strengthening governance systems and institutions, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training. Other key areas of concern captured at the conference relate to: women empowerment, improving public sector performance, increasing public and private-sector interactions, promoting innovation through harnessing new technologies, improving the management of development programmes and, paying sufficient attention to the borderless potential the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution has on offer. All these key areas of interest are calibrated the 41<sup>st</sup> AAPAM Roundtable Conference Annual Conference sub-themes.
12. As has been the case with previous AAPAM Roundtable Conferences, the 41<sup>st</sup> Roundtable Conference is partnering with the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (UNDESA) to enrich deliberations, sharing of experiences and learning especially in the areas of institutions for innovation in the public service and enhancing service delivery through digital transformation.

### ***OBJECTIVES OF THE ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE***

13. This Roundtable conference will convene to reflect, dissect and discuss issues related to transforming African public administration institutions as a shared responsibility with a view to realise the following objectives:
  - a) To discuss and agree on how to prepare institutions for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR).

- b) To inquire into with a view to understand the role the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in accelerating sustainable African institutions and good governance promotion in Africa.
- c) To confirm and reaffirm the centrality of public administration in the evolving African Regional Integration Agenda.
- d) Demonstrate that digital transformation of institutions is a veritable tool for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- e) Validate and encourage delegates to efficiently deploy public sector institutions for the economic empowerment of people living with disabilities, women and the youth.
- f) Discuss and agree on how to actualise sustainable development in Africa through remodelling local governments and institutions.
- g) Discuss the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and the critical role of innovations and technological breakthroughs in building resilient public service institutional capacities including systems able to deliver essential public services during disruptive crisis.
- h) Share experiences from practical Case Studies

### ***EXPECTED OUTCOMES***

14. It is expected that at the conclusion of the conference, delegates will take home the following outcomes:
- a) Deliberations on a clear concept and pathway on how to prepare public institutions for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR).
  - b) Awareness on the role played by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in accelerating sustainable African institutions and the promotion of good governance in Africa.
  - c) The centrality of public administration in the evolving African Regional Integration Agenda is established and reaffirmed.
  - d) Digital transformation of institutions as a veritable tool for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals is discussed
  - e) Deeper understanding of ways and means of deploying public institutions for the economic empowerment of people living with disabilities, women and the youth is achieved
  - f) Deeper understanding of public sector institutional arrangements for innovation in the public service
  - g) Avenues to actualise sustainable development in Africa through remodelling local governments and institutions explored and defined.

## ROUND-TABLE SUB-THEMES

### *A. Preparing Public Institutions for the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR)*

15. According to Manda & Backhouse, 2017, the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution is projected to bring disruptive changes to the labor market. Demand for highly skilled labor is projected to increase. The digital transformation and innovations in the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution demand a new breed of worker, one that is skilled, innovative and technological savvy. It is a foregone conclusion that the advent of the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution promises significant social and economic opportunities and challenges which demand that governments respond appropriately in supporting the expected societal transformation. Contributors in this dynamic field will explain the challenges confronting African countries in the adoption of digital transformation agendas to leverage the social and economic benefits of a digital-driven governance and service delivery.
16. Contributors will illustrate the opportunities and challenges of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution in Africa and will at the same time explain what strategies African countries have put in place to promote digital transformation. Contributors will demonstrate that development of policies and strategies that are responsive to the priorities of African countries will require that governments work collaboratively with social partners in addressing some of the challenges and leveraging the opportunities brought by the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution.
17. UNDESA will present the results of the 2022 United Nations E-Government Survey which highlights successful practices of digital government and digital transformation with data showing the status of African countries in terms of e-government. UNDESA will also conduct a workshop through which participants will share experiences and learn how to strengthen the use of e-government and create a culture of innovation in the public service to improve government performance in various aspects of service delivery.

***B. The Role of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in Accelerating Sustainable African Public Institutions through effective implementation of CEPA Principles (CEPA)***

18. In the recent past concern has been raised with regard to the regressing levels of development in Africa, a situation that has partly contributed to what development experts call an 'institutional overload'. Institutional overload refers to the presence of fragmented-multiple institutions that are all tasked with addressing the same challenges. Over time, many new institutions have come up with the aim of reorienting the political will of African leaders. And other institutions have gone through modifications that rarely accumulated into significant changes that have a coherent direction.
19. The APRM is Africa's home-grown mechanism to promote peer-learning on governance best practices on the Continent alongside adherence of member states to AU standards and codes. Since its establishment in 2003, the Mechanism conducted various assessment reports for African states to improve policies in four governance thematic areas: political, economic, corporate, and socio-economic governance. With the 2016 institutional reforms, the APRM was assigned by the AU to an expanded mandate which aims to enhance national governance reporting, support monitoring and evaluation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 as well as addressing root causes of conflict in Africa since APRM was assigned as an early warning mechanism.
20. The discourse on this subject will show the role of the APRM in enhancing governance of public institutions and their accountability through institution building and the application of CEPA Principles in Africa. Over the last three years, APRM established strong partnership with the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and AAPAM to raise awareness on the significance of CEPA Principles and strategies in promoting governance practices amongst African governments.
21. The APRM-UNDESA organized two continental workshops in Pretoria and Cape Town in 2019 and 2021 to offer a multi-Stakeholder's platform for African senior experts, AU organs and UN agencies to raise awareness of National civil servants on the principles and encourage evidence-based assessment of its implementation at national levels. The APRM also launched a baseline study of assessment on the implementation of the latter principles in 17 African countries in 2021 in Nairobi in partnership with AAPAM, as a key partner and member of the APRM Taskforce on CEPA Principles in Africa.

22. Granted that the APRM compels and cajoles governments to open up to scrutiny, the contribution will show how governments respond to various socio-economic pressures by adopting CEPA strategies, especially those pertinent to public sector competence, sound policy making , transparency, integrity , and leaving no one behind.
23. Further, contributors in this segment will respond to the dilemma that APRM envisages institutional change resulting from deliberate cooperation and the governments' responses to shocks i.e. COVID-19. Given that cooperation at the country and continental levels are imperative to responsiveness and preparedness of institutions towards crises and transitional contexts, the APRM can share insights on how to manage dynamics like transformational leadership and management style, organizational style, monitoring and evaluations of continental and national development agendas, and the carefully calculated trade-offs between action and effect. Reflections from member states on the implementation of some CEPA strategies will be emphasized and shared within the AAPAM meeting. Therein will also delve into and show APRM's role in institutionalizing the epic role of shared responsibility for sustainable development.
24. The devastation of the COVID-19 has called into question the capacity and innovatively potential of public health institutions to anticipate and contain global pandemics. This section will reflect on institutional mechanism and innovative capacity needed to build a sustainable public health institutional infrastructure that can manage and contain pandemics of destructive scale like the novel coronavirus.

### ***C. The Centrality of Public Administration in the Evolving African Regional Integration Agenda***

25. On May 30<sup>th</sup> 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) officially came into force. The agreement, signed by all but three of Africa's fifty-five nations, establishes the largest free trade area in the world since the creation of the World Trade Organization in 1995. Once the remaining countries join, AfCFTA will cover more than 1.2 billion people and over \$3 trillion in GDP. Contributors to this novel yet exciting discourse will, among other things, extrapolate that while AfCFTA promises to unlock Africa's economic potential, the agreement still faces an uphill battle in actualizing implementation of

agreed disciplines, more particularly with regard to the capacity of public administration to support and facilitate cross border trade initiatives.

26. Contributors will demonstrate that public administration institutions have a central role in ensuring that AfCFTA aspirations are actualized. There is no doubt, if efficiently implemented; AfCFTA aims find true resonance with the SDGs and Agenda 2063. In that, the projected benefits of the agreement are significant and carry expectations of increasing intra-African trade and international investment thereby impacting the lives of ordinary Africans across the continent. Importantly, contributors will link public sector institutional reform to the effective and efficient implementation of AfCFTA. Public administration will play a key role, more especially in critical yet sensitive areas of trade facilitation, which entails enhancing infrastructure and boosting productive and trade capacities, reducing transport costs, addressing non-tariff barriers.

#### ***D. Public Service Innovation and Digital Transformation of Institutions as a Tool for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals***

27. This exciting discourse delves into the versatile world of digitization in revolutionizing and transforming the way governments implement their development agenda. The appropriately christened 'Digital Revolution' has eased into and reset the public discourse in many countries. It is becoming increasingly clear that innovation including through digital changes are becoming a key driving force in societal transformation. The transformation towards sustainability for all must be harmonized with the threats, opportunities and dynamics of the Digital Revolution, the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Africa Agenda 2063.

28. Proposals and recommendations on the steps needed to promote the spirit and institutional arrangements for innovations in the public service will be made with emphasis put on promoting institutions in the public service that foster innovation to improve service delivery sustainably and equitably and to make the public service resilient and to be everready and quick to act in times of crisis. The participants will be familiarized with several innovative institutional arrangements and practices that contributed to innovations and improvements in public service delivery.

29. Contributors in this segment will show that digital transformation will radically alter all dimensions of global societies and economies and will therefore change the interpretation of the sustainability paradigm itself. Presenters will demonstrate that digitalization is not only an 'instrument' to resolve sustainability challenges, but additionally, perhaps more importantly, it is a fundamental driver of disruptive change.
30. Digital Revolution is central in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's call for innovative transformation and the coalescing values and principles such as 'leaving no one behind', integration, partnerships, and universality, and how all these lofty ideals can and should be translated into action. The primary anchor for contributors will be that public institutions need to embrace innovation and transformation to deliver more effective, timely and responsive services, and embody the principles of transparency, accountability and inclusion. On this subject matter, the AAPAM in its 41<sup>st</sup> Roundtable conference will collaborate with UNDESA to launch the United Nation's 2020 E-government Survey report.

### ***E. Institutions as Enablers of Economic Empowerment for People Living with Disabilities, Women and the Youth***

31. It has been said that effective, inclusive and accountable public-sector institutions are critical for the implementation of the AU agenda 2063 and the achievement of the SDGs. Studies have shown that despite the significant development milestones that have been made, inequality remains high in Africa. Contributors on this sub-theme will elaborate on the truism that empowerment of people demands actions along multiple fronts, including but not limited to: political commitment; common objectives; inclusive policies that are coherent and integrated across sectors; a strong, just and non-discriminatory legal framework; appropriate institutional arrangements that facilitate civic engagement and broad-based participation but more importantly aspiration for and determination of vulnerable groups and individuals to improve their well-being.
32. Based on these key fundamentals, contributors will call on African governments to establish or strengthen institutions that facilitate civic engagement and broad-based participation of all citizens and communities in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of socio-economic policies. Further appropriate public sector policies should be adopted to encourage both public and private

investment in social and economic infrastructure to aim for and achieve universal access to basic social protection and social services as a measure of empowering people, more especially the vulnerable in society. Contributors will demonstrate that reformed institutions eventually acquire acceptable levels of agility to develop strategies to empower women, youth, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, the elderly and other marginalized groups in society.

### ***F. Modeling Decentralized Governments and Institutions Towards Sustainable Development***

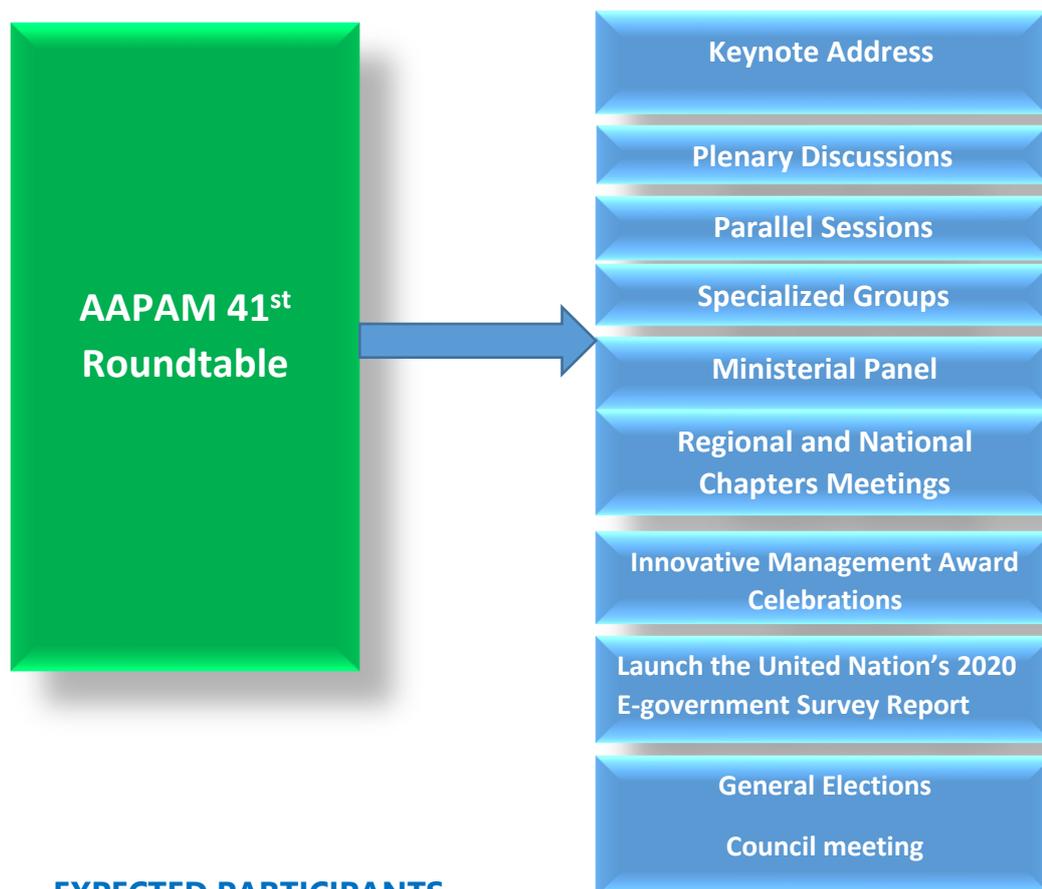
33. Calls for localization of the SDGs are justified in view of the central role this sphere of government plays in servicing the needs of populations within the precincts of a given locality. It is clear there is insufficient discussion on whether cities and human settlements have the autonomy, capacity, and resources to effectively implement the SDGs in the first place. Contributors will illustrate that local governments often struggle to take action on sustainable development initiatives due to a number of constraints. These include; limited political and fiscal power, lack of access to development finance, low levels of institutional capacity, absence of robust multi-level government cooperation and integration.
34. Contributions will further expound that without first acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by local governments in Africa, SDGs' localization will not benefit majority of the urban population; it will fail to build sustainable governance; and will constrain the achievement of sustainable outcomes. Contributors will contend that local governments need to strengthen their own capacities for action, build up strong partnerships, and above all, be committed to the SDG vision of inclusive sustainable development that leaves no one and no place behind. This segment will discuss key enabling conditions for local governments to promote sustainable developments.

### ***G. Country Case Studies***

35. The Case Study segment is the soundboard for the practical amplification of conference reflections. This is where participants showcase the lived experiences of the conference discourse. This section will be dedicated to selected country responses to the COVID-19, more particularly the post COVID-19 dispensation, detailing how the pandemic has influenced institutional

realignment to anticipate, stay the course and even improve service delivery in much of Africa.

## THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE JOINT ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE



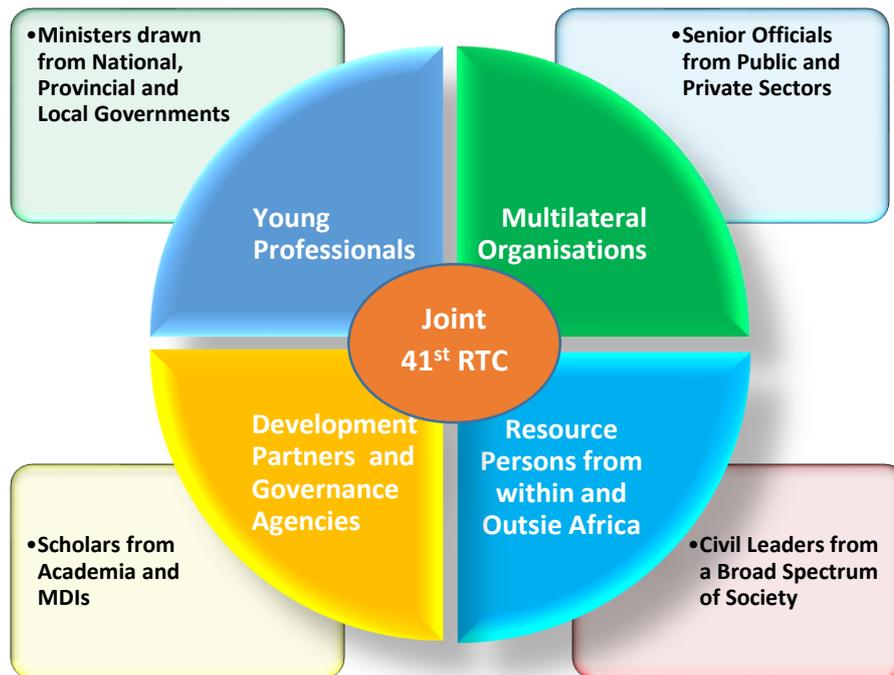
## EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

36. Besides governments, individuals and non-state actors, AAPAM values the attendance of partner institutions. This is why in the 40<sup>th</sup> Roundtable Conference, the following partners graced the occasion:

- the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA),
- the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS),
- the African Cabinet Government Network (ACGN),
- Africa Public Sector Human Resource Network (APS-HRMnet),
- Association of African Public Service Commissions (AAPSCOMs),
- Parliamentarian of the African Parliament (PAP),
- South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM)

- h) The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)
- i) Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

37. Overall delegates to the Roundtable conference are drawn from and comprise the following:



## CONFERENCE VENUE AND DATES

38. The conference will be held from 6<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa

## CONTENT FOR THE CONFERENCE

39. Speakers and presenters at the Conference will be identified by AAPAM in collaboration with partnering institutions. For the speakers, the following deadlines shall be adhered to:



## 11.0 WORKING LANGUAGES

The working language shall be **ENGLISH, FRENCH, and ARABIC.**

## 12.0 REGISTRATION AND PARTICIPATION FEES

31. All participants are expected to register online:

<http://www.aapam.org> and pay registration fees at the following rates:

- (a) Participants from host country - **USD**
- (b) Others / International - **USD**
- (c) Accompanying Persons (spouses of participants) - **USD**

**32.** Participation fees shall be paid at the time of registration and/or at the venue of the conference. However, Delegates are encouraged to pay earlier (at least 3 weeks to the conference date) and may pay by bank transfer to the AAPAM Account whose details are given below:

AAPAM A/C FCY 1103297694  
Kenya Commercial Bank  
Milimani Branch  
P.O. Box 69695, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel; +254 20 2719433/2719434, 2719470  
Fax: +254 20 2729942  
SWIFT CODE: KCBLKENX

33. Those paying by bank transfer are expected to show evidence of payment on the day of the conference. Delegates may pay the equivalent of the participation fees indicated above in other convertible currencies such as the Euro, British Pound Sterling (GBP), Canadian Dollar (CND), and South African Rand. The equivalents of the participation fees in these currencies shall be indicated in a schedule that will be available at the registration desk.

#### **VISA, HOTEL ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS INFORMATION**

34. Full information shall be posted on the AAPAM, website: [www.aapam.org](http://www.aapam.org)

#### **CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT**

**Further information and inquiry on the conference may be directed to:**

**AAPAM Secretariat**  
*The Secretary General*  
*132 Fuchsia Close, Gigiri*  
*Nairobi, Kenya.*  
*P O Box 48677, 00100 GPO,*  
*Nairobi, Kenya*  
*E-mail: [aapam@aapam.org](mailto:aapam@aapam.org)*

## REFERENCES MATERIAL

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