



**THE AFRICAN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES'
NETWORK (AMDIN) CONFERENCE AND FIRST BIENNIAL
GENERAL MEMBERS (BGM) MEETING
DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, MIDRAND,
SOUTH AFRICA
29 to 31 AUGUST 2007**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The African Management Development Institutes' Network (AMDIN) held its Conference and inaugural Biennial General Members' meeting (BGM) at the Development Bank of Southern Africa, Midrand in South Africa from the 29 to 31 August 2007. The conference met as a network of management development institutes (MDIs) and schools of administration and government to deliberate on the theme "*MDIs: Developing Public Sector Capacity for Africa's 21st Century Needs*". The conference was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Commonwealth Secretariat, IBM and the Development Bank of Africa (DBSA). The conference proceedings are presented below.

29 August 2007

PRE-CONFERENCE DAY

IBM sponsored and provided training for two ICT workshops to delegates on the pre-conference day. These presentations concerned project and programme management as well as e-learning strategies offered by IBM.

The Heads of MDIs also held a forum in the afternoon with two presentations initiating these discussions. Dr Roland Msiska from the Southern Africa Capacity Initiative of the UNDP highlighted the need for MDIs to become innovative and learning organisations. Mr Modise Makhetha from the Meraka Institute presented the positive returns to MDIs opting to use Open Source Software in their activities. The conclusion from the deliberations during this discourse was that there was need for more constructive engagement to help MDIs grapple with challenges that they face as had been illustrated with the Singapore Civil Service College engagement with African MDIs.

The outgoing AMDIN Council held the 4th meeting of the AMDIN Executive Council. It deliberated matters pertaining to the AMDIM programme and activities

for 2007/08 as well as the logistical details pertaining to the preparation and programme for the AMDIN conference. This was the last meeting for the 2005 – 2007 Council and a new Council was elected at the BGM.

On the evening of the pre-conference day IBM hosted a networking dinner for the Heads of Institutions on the evening of this pre-conference day. Mr Alf Kale, the IBM Business Development Executive stressed the IBM commitment to the goals of NEPAD as well as IBM availability to interact with MDIs at the level of individual institutes.

30 August 2007

OPENING SESSION

On behalf of the AMDIN Chairperson, the deputy Chairperson, Prof Sheikh Abdullah welcomed the distinguished guests from the diplomatic community, development partners, and MDIs to this historic conference.

The opening address was given by the Chairperson of the 5th and 6th Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Service, H.E. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. This was followed by the address from the UNDP delivered by Mr Joseph Mugore on behalf of the Director for Regional Bureau for Africa. The DBSA Unit Manager for Agencies, Ms Christina Golino offered the final address for the opening session. Messages of support were received from the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) and from the Brazil National School of Administration (INAP).

PLENARY SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

During this session discussions were centred on the historical and development trend of public administration and development in Africa.

Mr Tlohang Sekhamane presented the historical development of public administration and management highlighting the influence of globalisation and the review of public administration in Africa.

In his presentation Prof Victor Ayeni raised two issues pertaining to the current state of public administration and management in Africa. These are the failure to retain skills and the inability to adapt to contemporary practice to improve on training. This requires that the MDIs rise to the challenge, develop and implement succession processes that would contribute significantly to the strategic direction for MDIs.

Mr Ngambo Fondjo reiterated the constraints which include human and administrative that persistently plague the civil service from a francophone perspective.

PLENARY SESSION 2: TRENDS IN PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY NEEDS IN AFRICA

Mr Joseph Mugore shared the lessons learnt from the UNDP Southern African Capacity Initiative for capacity development highlighting the methodological challenges experienced in the process.

Dr Heshpina Rukato provided the continental perspective on capacity development. She presented the strategic framework that allows for capacity development at the individual, institutional and systemic level highlighting the role

MDI could contribute in the process under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

There was a presentation by the Meraka Institute on *Free Open Source Software* indicating the potential that MDIs could use to integrate contemporary technology at reduced costs.

BIENNIAL GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING

The conference delegates held the first AMDIN BGM on this day. The agenda for the meeting centred around council elections, the AMDIN constitutional changes and AMDIN membership as well as the report on AMDIN activities by the acting CEO. A new AMDIN Executive Council for the term 2007 to 2009 was elected. The council composition is reflected in the BGM report. The acting CEO also presented to the BGM the status of the current and future activities and programmes for AMDIN.

31 August 2007

PLENARY SESSION 3: WHAT ROLE FOR MDIS IN AFRICA

Dr Mamadou Dia highlighted the support of African Union Commission for Political Affairs in the endeavour of public sector capacity development. He stressed that it was important for MDIs to position themselves with their governments and regional organisations to realise this

Dr Margaret Kobia presented the experience of the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) reflecting the challenges the MDI had encountered in meeting the growing needs of the public service within a constrained capacity context. She reinforced the importance of including ICT as a point of government refocuses and for KIA.

The last conference event saw the delegates organise around two working groups where they further deliberate matters pertinent to their strategic position in developing public sector capacity in view of the presentation and their experience as training institutions targeting the African public sector.

WORKING GROUP 1:

Purpose: Developing a continent wide position on a conducive environment within which MDIs can function optimally with the aim of developing and restoring public sector capacity on the continent.

This working group acknowledged and reiterated the challenges that MDIs face in providing training. It was agreed that MDIs and university schools of administration and governance seek and establish common ground in training for coherent public sector capacity development.

Ms Anne Githuku Shongwe provided the input paper for this working group. In her presentation she proposed the merits of a virtual MDI developed and implemented throughout the continent by AMDIN. Dr Helena Kerr do Aramal provided an overview of the Brazil National School of Administration reflecting on its challenges of acting as a coordinating agent to the various schools of government in Brazil as well as conducting e-training for senior civil servants.

It was proposed that AMDIN develop and franchise the "virtual" MDI and to franchise this model that would be accompanied with a package of services that would meet the needs of the reforming the public service. Secondly the MDIs concurred on the need to strengthen the managerial and leadership capacity of the MDIs top management.

WORKING GROUP 2:

Purpose: Raising the quality of MDIs overall performance across the continent

Ms Poh Ling showcased the Singapore Civil Service as a model for best practice. She reflected on the interaction within the strategic departments within the college and government that ensured a continuum between its agenda, anticipated changes and its strategic planning to contribute to continuous learning. Prof Stephen Adei also talked about the GIMPA experience projecting the achievements of his institute that were the result of government reform and transformation.

This working group reflected on the impediments that MDIs continually face in the pursuit for general acceptable level of standards in their training delivery. They agreed that the following areas required urgent attention. There was an urgent need to create a standardised way of delivering quality and innovative training. The working group proposed that MDIs should generate a unique blend of curricula borne of African experience suitable for reforming African public service that would also be shared across the continent. The group stressed the critical importance of sharpening the skills of trainers, researchers, consultants, and administrators working for the MDIs that would in turn be geared to generating innovative and productive approaches to delivering training. Finally it was suggested that AMDIN play a key role in standard setting and quality assurance aligning these to the African context utilising international experience as points of reference.

CLOSING SESSION

The conference resulted in specific propositions for the various stakeholders involved in the capacity development of the public sector. These are reflected below. The conference delegates concurred that capacity building should and

must be viewed as a long term agenda and agreed that short term solutions that would realise the achievement of this agenda should be expediently adopted.

To the MDIs the proposal made was the importance to determine the relevance of their present activities and that they interact with one another to inform the development of their activities such as training and consulting for further development. This included a shift in mindset that would also recognise and acknowledge good practice from amongst themselves.

Secondly, to the African governments it was imperative that the states continue or commence funding towards MDIs for their sustained existence. This would reflect governments' recognition of the role of MDIs, increase the latter's accountability and continue to promote intra-continental partnership of Public Administration and Management in Africa.

To the development partners working with MDIs the conference acknowledged and appreciated the financial and technical support provided to the conference and the event. The need to incorporate and African agenda with development partners was reiterated. In addition, the various stakeholders were reminded of the people's agenda and that MDIs and universities were encouraged to foster interaction and collaborations.

Finally the roles of AMDIN in reinforcing the above was commended and reinforced to be that of providing further linkages between state, civil society and private sector as well as intensify the inclusion of more MDIs into the AMDIN network.

With the concluding remarks noted above and the vote of thanks issued for the assistance provided by the various development partners in hosting the AMDIN Conference and BGM, the newly elected AMDIN Chairperson thanked the delegates and officially closed the conference.