

**OPENING STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE  
CONFERENCE OF ALL AFRICA MINISTERS OF PUBLIC/CIVIL  
SERVICE, THE HON. GERALDINE FRASER MOLEKETI AT THE 1<sup>ST</sup>  
CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE  
AFRICAN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES' NETWORK  
(AMDIN)**

Thursday, 30 August 2007, Vulindlela Training Academy, Development  
Bank of Southern Africa, Midrand, South Africa

Observe all protocol

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today, virtually to the day, 2 years ago the African Management Development Institutes' Network (AMDIN) was launched in Sandton, Johannesburg. Many of you were present on that historical day where you adopted your first constitution, and elected the leadership team for the first term to steer the organization through its first two years – a period we all know can be challenging but are of immense importance for the longer term effectiveness of an organisation.

I am happy to admit here today, that there was a period that we were worried that the AMDIN child was going to be short-lived when the first 15 months passed with very little progress to show. However, true leadership was shown when from within the team at the helm of the organization some

critical questions were asked, checking within the ranks on what needs doing, better, smarter and faster. When resources, however limited, was committed to the process because we believed in the organization. We have seen how commitment, dedication and energy, backed up by some financial resources can quickly show results. We are now a mere 9 months after that process of introspection. AMDIN has clearly turned the corner and is now stronger with more potential than ever before. Within the range of initiatives that the Ministers' Conference have spawned during the past four years, I would argue that AMDIN is now one that shows significant potential of turning into a true legacy initiative.

The training of an expert cadre of trainers under the 5 year JICA funded programme is well-underway. AMDIN has been strongly networked within the public administration knowledge community – both on the continent, but also further a field internationally. The AMDIN name and concept is one that is becoming more familiar and events such as this conference will greatly aid in terms of raising the profile of AMDIN.

The importance of the launch of AMDIN in August 2005 was not necessarily in what the network constituted at the time, but rather how a number of the approaches we believe are of fundamental importance in the development and reconstruction of the African continent came together. Amongst these approaches were the commitment to African ownership of the network and its initiatives; sharing among one another our little material resources, but generous in the ideas and thoughts; acknowledging the importance of public administration for development and above all, a burning desire for continuous improvement. It mirrored the very real

commitment evident in many of the African Union and the NEPAD programme's documents, a desire and determination, a necessity for Africa to extricate herself from the malaise of underdevelopment and the invidious position she finds herself in, in terms of the globalizing world.

Consequently, it was **the potential** of what the network stood for, the vision we had for it, that was really important.

The launch of AMDIN, although flowing from an organic process from within the ranks of the MDIs, most notably the Development Policy Management Forum (DPMF) based in Ethiopia at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was not a development that stood loose from the overall concern we had on a political level about the very pressing need we have for raising the overall performance of African public and civil services, and particularly the management cadre, if we are to make headway in Africa's development. However, at the 3rd and 4th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service, African Ministers of Public Service recognized and reaffirmed the importance of MDIs and the need to support them. The Windhoek declaration

*"...(re)affirmed the crucial role played by the national public administration schools and institutes and the need to develop and strengthen their ability to prepare the public servants of the future to deal with the challenges of globalisation".*

At this Conference the Ministers agreed to a continental partnership programme on Governance and Public Administration, to be championed and implemented within the fold of the New Partnership for Africa's

Development (NEPAD). There is now explicit recognition that MDIs need to be aligned with the government's service delivery agenda.

The nexus between the development of human resource and organizational capacity in the public sector of African countries and Africa's ability to lift itself from poverty and become a player in the global economy has been irrefutably established.

Some evidence for this position has been generated by both the UN and the World Bank.

*"... in order for the institutions of governance to perform their functions efficiently and effectively they must be endowed with the appropriate capacities. Good governance is a development issue with capacity-building ramifications." UN Economic Commission for Africa, **African Governance Report 2005**, p. 197, ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

*"Clearly, there are capacity implications for implementing an MDG-based development strategy in relation to the ability of countries to manage the scale-up needed to achieve the goals in the time left before 2015, while at the same time expanding the delivery of essential services. From public sector management and administration, to human resources and infrastructure, the need to strengthen the ability of countries to absorb additional resources and at the same time build their own national and local capacity has never been so important to achieving sustainable development outcomes." Kermil Dervis "Today's Critical Challenge:*

Building Capacity to Achieve the MDGs” *World Bank Development Outreach, September 2005*

It is therefore undeniable that AMDIN is seen as an extremely important vehicle to assist in developing the necessary capacity for us to catapult our respective public services out of their traditional bureaucratic comfort zones, into high-performing institutions. MDI’s are the strategic capacity development agency of the public service that has the responsibility and opportunity to transform the hearts and minds of public servants to produce the results that they are committed to.

But how does this future African public service look like – in the very broadest of terms – that AMDIN should assist in creating:

- The 21<sup>st</sup> Century African public service has to be a *Learning Organization*. Learning Organization in which people at all levels, individually and collectively, are continually increasing their capacity to produce results they really care about – where the organization encourages new ways of thinking, where the collective vision of creating the best is liberated, and where everybody continuously learns how to learn together.<sup>1</sup> If the African Public Service is to lead Africa to attain its commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, new ways of doing business and continuously solving problems is essential.
- **Driven by the vision of commitment to *service to citizens*** shared across public service. The philosophy of Batho Pele in South Africa,

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<sup>1</sup> The Fifth Discipline, Peter Senge

Results for Kenyans and Namibia's slogan of 'we care' attest to the recognition of the centrality of service to citizens as the main driver of public service performance. It is no longer organizations in which performance is defined in relation to inputs and processes of government no matter its impact – or lack of it – on the citizens. The people in the public service must transform their systems and processes to place citizens and results at the centre of their performance.

- **Strong, visionary and ethical leadership is central.** Leaders lead by example through diligence, honesty & commitment to succession. Where we have experienced challenges in terms of effective service delivery or even corrupt practice there is often a leadership vacuum or lack of leaders who 'lead by example' – leaders continuously inspire the entire public service
- **Systematic and continuous *planning*** across the public service, planning that recognises changing scenarios both internal and external rather than blueprints. These planning practices respond to and keep up with extremely rapidly changing situations. In some of South East Asia for example strategy and planning is built around probable scenarios that change every 3 years or so necessitating regular review. Such planning is followed up by such rapid implementation initiatives that after 2 years changes in approach and plans are evident. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Africa public service must inculcate evidence-based planning and policy making to ensure relevance to citizens.

If MDIs have to bring about such public services on the African continent, they themselves need strengthening and developing. And I believe in this respect AMDIN can play an immensely powerful role.

In general, the track record of MDIs in Africa has not been outstanding. Many MDIs derailed their real value-add by not supporting the core service delivery and policy imperatives of government, but to get side-tracked into other activities, setting in motion a vicious self-destructing process. High level government support for MDIs steadily waned. The challenges that MDIs in Africa face are frequently shared, with the following common challenges emerging:

- *Leadership challenges*: many MDIs have experienced a combination of high turnover among senior leadership and poor quality leadership.
- *Financial sustainability*: many MDIs have undergone changes in their resource base and funding environment. For example, MDIs have been subjected to the conflicting directives of having a market orientation and, at the same time, delivering programmes to an under-resourced public sector clientele.
- *Reputation and capabilities*: it has been difficult for many MDIs to retain and/or establish a reputation for excellence, partly due to their historical turbulences.

- *Institutional sustainability and staff turnover*: many MDIs have struggled to sustain, grow and change the institution at the same time. High staff turnover and lost institutional memory are key stumbling blocks.
- *Competition and marketisation*: many MDIs are subject to increased competition from privately established MDIs and from foreign competitors.

One of the key things that need happening is that MDIs must become a central driver again of far reaching Public Service transformation on the continent.

Public Service Transformation for effective service delivery assumes a certain level of knowledge and skills, specific values and attitudes, “ethos”, morality, common vision and consensus on development goals. This is rarely the case. The key question to be addressed by MDI’s (whose mandate it is to facilitate transformation,) what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for transformation to take place and be sustained in each country context. Important points to note:-

- Alignment of the MDI’s with your governments programme of Action. MDI’s require knowledge and thorough understanding of the agenda of government;
- Underlying assumptions about efficient, effective and accountable delivery of services can actually wreck some of the best intended initiatives;

- Identification of what constitutes the key positive feedback loops between MDI's (Public Service Training Institutes) and the Public Service to be effective agents for service delivery;
- Understanding the cause and effect relationships of problems and their solutions;

To drive change MDI's should facilitate consensus building on key points of leverage for transformation of the public service. More than knowledge and skills MDIs need to facilitate a common vision on development goals and strategy to achieve them. To have common vision, there are specific values and attitudes, mindsets to align to those goals.

Management Development Institutes bears the statutory mandate to contribute to the enhancement of the capacity of the state by delivering through human and institutional development. For example, in South Africa SAMDI is mandated to play a leading role in implementing the Human Resources Development Strategy for the public sector. In addition to focusing on the HRD Strategy, the MDI role has to go beyond that to cultivate and nurture the new leadership to drive the capability agenda of the country. They should also contribute to improving the system of intergovernmental relations and the integrity of the systems of the systems of government as well as the processes with which government uses to deliver services.

In order to drive the Public Sector Reform Agenda it is necessary for MDI's to develop certain capacities including the ability to rigorous analyse government's performance. They must have capacity to assess the

efficacy of governance and service delivery institutions; and they should further have the ability to develop and enhance the relevance and productivity of human capital.

Above all, MDIs are responsible to inculcate a *culture of change, learning and continuous improvement*. At its apex of government, Singapore has an innovative programme called PS21 – Public Service of the 21<sup>st</sup> century -- with a philosophy that encourages public servants to anticipate and embrace change in their work. PS21 encourages innovative ideas from public servants that can solve a particular problem related to their effectiveness.

Organizations are products of the way people in them think and interact. To change organizations for the better, one must give people the opportunity to learn new ways to think and interact. Given the choice, very few people would not elect to be part of a team where there is excitement, commitment, perseverance, willingness to experiment, genuine appreciation of one another's gifts (and limitations) and the ability to effectively tackle complex issues.

I believe AMDIN's biggest challenge is to create the space, and simultaneously move into the space where we can fundamentally change the hearts and minds of first those in your member institutions, and they in turn passing that change on to the public servants and their managers at large.

It is with great interest that I am watching AMDIN growing for the next two years and beyond and starting to show significant fruit.

Mr. Chair, I wish you the very best with this conference and the work that will flow it.

I thank you.