Report on the International Human Resource Management Conference co-hosted by the Public Service Commission of South Africa and the International Public Management Association for Human Resources: 20 to 21 April 2007, Cape Town International Convention Center

Conference theme:
Building Public Sector Human Resource Capacity in a Developmental state

APRIL 2007

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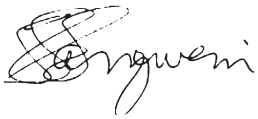
FOREWORD

The first-ever International Human Resource Management Conference in Africa was held in April 2007 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre. The Conference was co-hosted by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR). The theme of the Conference was "Building Public Sector Resource Capacity in a Developmental State". The objectives of the Conference were, inter alia to:

- Share knowledge and insights between South African practitioners and their international counterparts on contemporary challenges facing human resource management in a developmental state.
- Provide opportunities for conversations and learning outside the paradigms created by institutionalised Human Resource Management (HRM) approaches.
- Create a platform for the establishment of partnerships locally, regionally and internationally.
- Promote good human resource management and career development practices to maximize human potential.

The accompanying report presents the ideas, challenges and possible solutions to Human Resource Management (HRM) implementation. Given the context of a developmental state and the challenges posed by globalisation, which the report addresses, the ideas presented here by role-players both local and international, will provide much food for thought to HR practitioners and managers alike.

HRM has become a strategic function within organisations, and nowhere more so than in the context of the South African Public Service. It is hoped that this report will contribute significantly towards finding workable solutions to attract appropriate candidates as well as retain them, in order to meet the strategic objectives of the South African Public Service.



PROF SS SANGWENI
CHAIRPERSON: PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

CHAPTER 1:
OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

CHAPTER 1: OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

1.1 BACKGROUND

This report provides a summary of the presentations and discussions at the International Human Resource Management Conference. The conference was held on the 20th and 21st of April 2007, in Cape Town, South Africa and was arranged by the Public Service Commission (PSC) of South Africa (SA), in partnership with the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR). The overall theme of the conference was "**Building Public Sector Human Resource Capacity in a Developmental State**".

The report follows the programme of the conference and provides a summary of the presentations made by various experts and practitioners on public sector human resource management. In addition, the report gives a summary of the plenary and commission discussions. The report concludes with an overview of the critical issues and focus areas that emerged from the conference dialogue.

The report does not provide a transcription of the presentations and discussions. Instead, a summary of all inputs and issues are provided as a basis for ensuring that the report is an accurate reflection of the deliberations and is able to inform future dialogue and thinking on public sector human resource management issues locally and globally. Attention has been focused on identifying the broader issues and trends rather than the detailed content of the presentation and discussion sessions. Attention was therefore focused on extracting the broader issues.

The opening plenary session provided the foundation for the deliberations and outlined the direction and objectives of the conference. Attention was focused on the Charter for Public Service in Africa as it sought to establish common standards and values for public service human resource management in Africa. The conclusions identified emerging trends in public sector human resource management. The issues include the broader direction of public sector human resources globally and the specific research and knowledge exchange challenges that stand before the human resource management community.

Given the complexity of the experiences in South Sudan and its centrality to the theme of the conference, the presentation and subsequent discussion has been included as a separate section in the report.

1.2 KEYNOTE ADDRESS: MS GERALDINE FRASER-MOLEKETI, MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION, SOUTH AFRICA.

In her opening address, the Minister expressed her pleasure in being able to share some thoughts at the event and her satisfaction with an initiative directed at promoting sound human resource management and knowledge sharing in the discipline. The co-hosting of this conference by the PSC and IMPMA-HR is also an ideal opportunity to bring together human resource practitioners from South Africa and across the globe to discuss the challenges of human resource management.

Human resource management in South Africa has been in a state of transformation. The need for a shift from personnel administration to human resource management was identified in the White Paper on Human Resource Management for the Public Service. This was a shift that was by no means easy and is one that South Africa is still dealing with today. Managing human resources effectively and strategically is the cornerstone of the broader transformation of the public service.

Traditionally, the management of people in the public service has been regarded as the task of personnel administration focused on ensuring compliance with centrally-determined regulations and prescripts. The White Paper, however, emphasised, the necessity to maximize people development, management and empowerment to accelerate transformation and service delivery for the benefit of the people of South Africa. Building cultural diversity and sound human resource management practices in a context of organisational complexity and limited financial resources is a major element of this process.

The theme of the conference speaks to the critical need for the South African Public Service to optimize the utilization of staff and ensure that there is continuous performance improvement through the recruitment and retention and development of competent staff. The significance of HRM is highlighted in the Africa Public Service Charter adopted by the 3rd Biennial Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service in Windhoek, Namibia on 5 February 2001.

The Charter stresses the obligations of the administration vis-à-vis public service employees with respect to the different stages of their careers, their remuneration and their working conditions. In particular, it emphasizes the importance of recruitment, promotion, mobility, redeployment, training, motivation, remuneration, physical safety, working conditions and security of tenure. It is thus a positive that the Charter will receive some focus from the conference. There are challenges in the implementation of the Charter, which requires a focus on the environment for implementation and an assessment of the relevance and efficacy of the Charter through in-depth research. In reviewing the Charter, the experiences of UNDESA from across the world should be drawn upon.

In concluding, the Minister urged delegates to recognise that the developmental state needs more than sound management. The developmental state needs leadership at all levels of the service delivery chain, for it is those who deliver services that are responsible for improving the lives of the citizenry. In doing this, there is a need to be wary of so-called best practice and management principles which are often safe havens for the unimaginative. The conference must thus serve as a spring-board to push the boundaries and allow excellence to shine through.

1.3 OPENING AND WELCOME: PROFESSOR SS SANGWENI, CHAIRPERSON, PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (PSC)

In his formal opening, Professor S.S. Sangweni welcomed the Ministers present, the attending members of parliament and all delegates to the conference. He reminded delegates that the PSC is

responsible for promoting good governance in the South African (SA) Public Service in terms of the values and principles enshrined in the SA Constitution. The PSC exercises oversight over all public administration practices in the Public Service, including that of human resource management.

Professor Sangweni pointed out that the IPMA-HR is an international organisation which represents the interests of human resource professionals at all levels of government. Its goal is to provide information and assistance to human resource professionals in enhancing their job performance and overall institutional functioning. The PSC has been working in partnership with the IPMA-HR over a number of years and was delighted at the opportunity to co-host the conference.

Human resources are often overlooked in a context of rapid technological advancement. However, few organisations can function without human resources regardless of the level of automation. Humans should be seen as the most important element of organisation and effective human resource management is essential to the success of organisations. The work-place is a microcosm of society and employees cannot be expected to operate without structures, values, rules, regulations, training, support, guidance, control and penalties to discourage non-conformity.

The unpredictability of human nature makes it difficult to forecast action. This is exacerbated by a tendency to devalue research in this area. This makes it imperative that human resource practitioners be trained in human behaviour and people management principles.

The Human Resource Management (HRM) discipline and function should not be overlooked in organisations. It is often back office human resource administration that is attended to while the behavioural and strategic side of human resource management is neglected. There is a need to look at broader policy issues and the kind of support that line managers would require. In this respect, consideration should be given to the value of the functions and the manner in which they are monitored and evaluated.

Human resource managers carry a wide responsibility and need to interact with their colleagues from other areas to understand the challenges faced and to share with them the values and opportunities of effective human resource management. The conference provides an important opportunity for such interaction.

1.4 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES: MS OR RAMSINGH, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

In her opening the Director-General welcomed delegates and expressed her gratitude to IPMA-HR for partnering with the PSC as well as confidence that this partnership would develop. It was noted that many of the attendees who participated in the International Symposium of IPMA-HR had joined the conference together with other delegates from both developed and developing countries. There was thus a wealth of human resource management professionals at the conference.

The Conference was being held against the backdrop of important objectives and commitments for development and sound administration in South Africa and Africa. The commitments are guided by, amongst others, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Africa Public Service Charter. Whilst human resource management practices are designed to meet the unique requirements of a specific employer, there are generic best practices that apply across the board. An international conference of this nature provides an opportunity to reflect on best practice and to share experiences.

Under the overall theme of "Building Public Sector Human Resource Capacity in a Developmental State", there are four objectives for the conference. Firstly, to share knowledge and insights between South African practitioners and their international counterparts on contemporary challenges facing human resource management in a developmental state. Secondly, to provide opportunities for conversations and learning outside the paradigms created by institutionalised HRM approaches. Thirdly, to create a platform for the establishment of partnerships locally, regionally and internationally. Fourthly, to promote good human resource management and career development practices to maximize human potential.

The Conference also reflects on the imperatives for public sector recruitment and some of the challenges that are experienced in this regard. The impact of staff turnover and the resulting depletion of skills cannot be ignored. It has become quite apparent that staff retention strategies are crucial to the establishment of a competent and productive public sector workforce. As this country moves to consolidate and build on the major achievements that it has made since the advent of democracy, renewed emphasis is being placed on building the quality of the public service workforce. It was therefore deemed appropriate to reflect on the building of the ideal workforce, the future challenges that the public sector faces in this regard and the strategies that may be required.

In concluding, Ms Ramsingh outlined the programme format and encouraged robust debate and the sharing of experiences on the topics of discussion. She also expressed confidence that delegates would emerge from the Conference with a broader, more in-depth and strategic understanding of the challenges facing human resource management which could be shared with their respective organisations.

CHAPTER 2:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN AFRICA

CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHARTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Keynote address by Minister Fraser–Moleketi served as the foundation for a discussion on the challenges in implementing the Charter for Public Service in Africa. The responses to the Minister's address were articulated within the framework for recognising that the Charter was subject to review and it is anticipated that the updated Charter would serve to establish further standards for public service across African countries. There were two respondents, Mr Mpendulo Mazibuko, Principle Human Resource Officer, Ministry of Public Service and Information, Swaziland and Mrs Adah Muwanga, Commissioner for Human Resource Development, Ministry of Public Service, Uganda. The respondents' comments are briefly alluded to in this Chapter.

2.2 MR MPENDULO MAZIBUKO, PRINCIPAL HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND INFORMATION, SWAZILAND

The Public Service Charter must be seen as an important benchmark for country practices as it establishes standards for assessing country level performance in public service. There are however many challenges that need to be considered for the implementation of the Charter at the national level.

Of particular importance is the involvement of all sectors in the Charter process. The legislature has to establish the framework and legislation for implementation. Whilst the responsibility for implementation resides with the executive, the responsibility should be exercised with civil society organisations. The media should also be a contributing partner in informing public servants of their rights and obligations.

In the implementation process, there must be recognition that the Charter should be located in the overall process of public service transformation and must be linked to relevant public service legislation. The overall success will depend on the commitment of top management and the Cabinet. It is in this respect considered essential that the Charter be reflected in public speeches.

At the level of detailed implementation, departments should establish focused capacity for monitoring implementation. The Charter could be linked to a performance management system and serve as a basis for assessing and monitoring the performance of departments. In particular, the public should be seen as part of the process of giving feedback on performance relative to the standards established by the Charter. Independent and parliamentary committees should be an essential part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

2.3 MRS ADAH MUWANGA, COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, UGANDA.

The idea of a Public Service Charter is very positive as it serves to respond to the reality of poverty in Africa and the specific role of the public service in development. From a human resource perspective, the Charter has some limitations. The issue of performance management has not been included and is important in the African context. Linked to this, the Charter does not address the need for good human resource planning.

There needs to be greater involvement in the Charter review process. This will help overcome the reality of challenges that are confronted in African public services. Work culture difficulties are of particular concern. The Charter needs to find ways of changing some of the cultural elements and reality of African public service institutions.

A larger challenge for the Charter is the reality of corruption in many countries. The Charter must be able to confront the corruption found in many public service institutions. Many of the detailed elements and standards established have to assist in eradicating the reality of corruption wherever it manifests itself.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Participants in the Conference recognised the importance of such a Charter and reflected on the need for the Governments of the Countries involved to build on the spirit of the Charter. Effective human resource management is a key pillar of the Charter and as such the human resource practitioners of the respective countries have a very importent role to fulfil if the ideals of the Charter are to be realised.

CHAPTER 3:
CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT

CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the sub-theme, two presentations were made within plenary and three within focused commissions. The presentations in plenary and in commissions were followed by questions and discussions. In addition to summarising the presentations, the discussions and issues raised by participants are included in the summary. In each case, the discussion issues are included after a summary of the actual presentations.

3.2 CHALLENGES IN RECRUITING PROFESSIONALS FOR PROVINCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY: DR G LAWRENCE, DIRECTOR-GENERAL: WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Human Resource Management (HRM) needs to be looked at in the context of globalisation and the realities of competition for limited capacities. The specific realities within developing countries suggest different challenges and approaches to human resource management. Attention needs to be focused on both strategic and practical issues and challenges in recruiting and retaining professionals at a provincial level.

The type of professional and specific skills sets required are determined by the development trajectory of the country. In the case of South Africa and the Western Cape Province, the realities of the development strategy and the needs of the province suggest a focus on particular scarce skills ranging from the medical sector to finance and planning. The specific challenges of the developmental state also suggest that professionals should have programme and project management skills. In recruitment terms, this requires a shift from traditional recruitment to a situation where recruitment is linked to service delivery needs.

One of the central challenges is the mobility of labour. Professionals are attracted by conditions in developed countries. In addition to the possibility of a brain-drain, the public service is faced with the emerging reality of flexible contracting and outsourced work arrangements. Such arrangements make it difficult to attract and retain professionals from previously disadvantaged groups in particular.

At a practical level, there are a number of challenges that need to be considered. The perception that labour legislation is inflexible is problematic as the reality is that it does accommodate the need for effective recruitment and retention. A larger challenge lies in ensuring that the public service is representative and has people with the required languages for effective delivery. The largest challenge for professional recruitment is the cumbersome recruitment procedures that need to be followed. The salary package of senior professionals is also a limiting factor.

These challenges require innovation in the recruitment and retention of people. The human resource function must be thought of in the context of the challenges of globalisation and the specific

challenges of a developmental state. The approach to professionals need to be less conventional. The future suggests a need for greater collaboration across spheres of government and further research on the emergent challenges to HRM.

3.2 THE WAR FOR TALENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE: MS MARY-JANE PETERS AND ROGER EGGLESTON, ASSOCIATION FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (AHRMIO), SWITZERLAND

HRM needs to be located in the global context of change and increased mobility of talent. Consideration needs to be given on how the global war on talent impacts on public services across the world. Strategies to recruit and retain the best available talent are important.

Recruitment and retention within public service institutions take place within the context of the values of public service, specific accountability and governance arrangements and the reality of limited fiscal resources. International and national organisations are all searching for the same people. Across the world there is convergence of salaries and overall employment conditions.

There is global competition for talent and the recruitment of knowledge workers. The pool of talent is shrinking as a result of falling birth rates and the reality of HIV/AIDS. The demands of new and younger talent are increasing and they have greater choices. Political appointments need to be limited and should not permeate organisations. The focus should be on recruiting and retaining the best candidates and those who are committed to service.

A key challenge is how to compete with the private sector. There is a need for innovation and for benchmarking with other sectors. The private sector, for example, recruits in innovative and less bureaucratic ways. The manner in which people are attracted can be broadened. This requires thinking "out of the box". Remuneration must be attractive to ensure people are retained but the focus should also be on other elements. In a survey, people identified happiness as a key element of job satisfaction.

There is a need to ensure that the areas requiring the best talent be identified to ensure that the best people are attracted to these positions. Building the brand image of the public sector will serve to attract some of the best available talent.

3.3 DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION TOPICS

Participants responded to both topics simultaneously. The following issues were highlighted:

- Political appointments should be made only in those areas where it makes functional sense. However, attention should be focused on ensuring that this does not compromise the standards

of neutrality and impartiality. At times, the rationale for political appointees tends to be patronage.

- In the challenge of attracting the best talent, attention needs to be focused on the tools that are being used. In many cases, the tools used are not optimal. For example, the process of outsourcing has not proven to be an optimal strategy for attracting and retaining the best talent. We also need to use the best measurement tools for performance and for ensuring that we have the best talent supervisors in place. With bad supervisors, we stand the chance of losing our talent.

3.4 COMMISSION 1: CHALLENGES IN APPLYING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: MR SQUIRE MAHLANGU, COMMISSIONER; PSC

Affirmative action entails establishing effective steps to eliminate discrimination and address the reality of past discrimination. People with equal abilities should have equal opportunities. The rationale for affirmative action is rooted in the nature of our society and its historical context. In South Africa, the need for affirmative action is located in the constitution and the imperative of ensuring that there is representivity within the public service. The challenge for affirmative action is not uniquely South African.

Affirmative action in South Africa is directed at ensuring that there are practical measures in place to support, develop and advance the previously disadvantaged in the public service. The establishment of a culture that values diversity and that seeks to support previously disadvantaged individuals is important. The South African public service has established specific targets for affirmative action. A set of core principles has been developed and specific responsibilities are outlined at all public service institutions.

When looking at the targets established, the largest challenge is in the terrain of people with disabilities. Inspiration for further action in this area can be taken from experiences in other countries. The Australian public service, for example, provides for the recruitment of people with intellectual disabilities, without the necessity for competition with people without such disabilities.

In 2005, the PSC conducted an audit of affirmative action implementation across government departments. The audit identified a number of challenges ranging from institutional to localised implementation. There is very little focus on removing barriers and on monitoring implementation to deal with some of the blockages within the recruitment and promotion process.

In response the conference participants highlighted the following:

- In the practice of affirmative action, we need to think carefully of the areas where people are recruited. Experiences suggest that in developed countries the strategy is used to recruit

minorities into areas of work that do not attract the more established indigenous population. This is a matter of concern that needs to be addressed through information on actual experiences and practices.

- A careful reflection of the definition of affirmative action and on actions required to ensure success is required. In this respect, affirmative action must be linked to the realities and multi-cultural context of service delivery. The challenge has been articulated on a number of occasions at the political level and needs to feature in the performance agreements of senior managers of public service institutions. Attention need to be on people with intellectual disabilities.

- Partnerships with higher education institutions should be considered to enhance the process of recruiting people with disabilities. In other countries, there are very positive relations between the public sector and institutions of higher education.

- There is a need to engage with the relevant organisations that represent people with disabilities to ensure more effective recruitment.

- Engagements with relevant organisations help the process but people need to take responsibility and ensure that recruitment takes place. Achievement of the objective requires hard work. In the recruitment process, the focus should be on the inherent requirements of the job and not just the qualifications required.

- The issue of job-hopping is a problem. This is a problem not unique to people with disabilities but affects all levels of the public service. People are moving rapidly and perhaps there is a need for controls which ensure that people stay in a position for at least two years.

- Affirmative action should not serve to exclude white males. The imbalances must be addressed and it is completely possible to attract white males at levels where there are none.

3.5 COMMISSION 2: RECRUITMENT BENCHMARKING SURVEY: MR NEIL REICHENBERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: IPMA-HR

Recruitment and selection is particularly important as it is the first step in an employee's life cycle. There are a number of challenges in this process. These include the need for a holistic approach to workforce planning, the brain drain and age bubble in some countries, the realities of technology and the need for organisations to be employers of choice. Recruitment should not be seen simply as the filling of jobs, but as a continuous investment to build a high quality workforce capable of accomplishing the organisation's mission now and in the future.

Within the framework of workforce planning, there is a need to focus on identifying workforce needs, analyzing what the current situation is and developing strategies to close the gap. A

workforce guide has been developed by IPM-HR and this is in the process of being updated. The model has four steps and is a fairly comprehensive framework for workforce planning.

Many countries are confronting the reality of an ageing work-force. Globalisation is establishing wider competition for specific jobs and positions. Loyalty to organisations is becoming less relevant to careers. Many countries are facing a brain drain and establishing strategies to deal with these realities. Many are using the brain drain as an opportunity for becoming an employer of choice.

The benchmarking survey of IPMA-HR covers a number of areas detailed in the presentation. In a large number of organisations, there are no fulltime staff dealing with recruitment. The survey also provides statistics on the number of recruits assigned to staff members, the hours spent on recruitment, the average time to hire someone and the costs to fill one vacancy.

In addition to the quantitative questions, the survey also addresses a number of substantive policy issues in the recruitment process. These include the terrains of recruitment (internal/external), non-monetary incentives, the channels of recruitment and the recruitment strategies used. The survey also revealed some interesting experiences and lessons in recruitment amongst certain countries and organisations.

In response to the presentation the participants highlighted the following:

- Situations suggest that recruitment of talent is good but this does not necessarily mean that such talent is retained. Turnover needs to be planned for and at times talent may be encouraged to move to other organisations. There are organisations that recruit talented individuals and then encourage them to move forward after a fixed period.

- There are situations where high performers in the private sector fail in the public sector. This is often the reality of context. Some people find it difficult to adapt to the culture and accountability frameworks within the public sector. It is not because these individuals are not talented, but that their talent is best experienced in particular environments.

- In thinking through recruitment issues, the planning aspect is essential. Part of the planning process entails making the organisation as attractive as possible. This includes focusing on the performance framework of the organisation and focusing on the problems identified by people during exit interviews. Marketing and effective public relations are key to attracting the best talent for specific jobs. In this respect there needs to be some shameless self-promotion.

3.6 COMMISSION 3: RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION BEST PRACTICES: DR NORMAN MAHARAJ, COMMISSIONER: PSC

The ability of any institution to recruit and retain high performance employees ranks as the top

challenge facing HR professionals. The responsibility for the management of recruited talent resides with managers. However, findings of the PSC reveal that managers are often not trained for this specific activity and fail to comply with basic standards. This reality places an added burden on the support that must be provided by HR practitioners.

A key strategy for attracting the best is establishing the public service as an employer of choice. Whilst there are many institutional strategies for doing this, careful attention should be focused on the manner in which public service jobs are advertised. These advertisements need to be clear on the training required, the type of skills required, the type and level of experience and behavioural traits required. The wording of the advertisements should not be treated in a mechanical manner.

The selection process is of particular importance to obtaining the right person for the advertised job. The process needs to be followed carefully to ensure that the right candidate reaches the final interview process. Each of the candidates need to be subjected to the same questions. Naturally, further probing questions may be added to the process. This process needs to be able to withstand legal scrutiny. A toolkit by the PSC has been developed to assist managers in this process.

It is equally important to ensure that organisations have the best available retention strategies. In this respect, the emphasis needs to fall on managers who supervise the recruited individuals. Often mangers fail to establish the required development plans for the individuals and pay very little attention to the performance management system. Establishing effective HR components is essential to the process of ensuring that managers are effectively supported in their human resource functions.

The conference participants raised the following matters in response:

- As interviews are not completely reliable, competency assessment is used for senior managers. Testing is contentious and might have cultural biases and challenges. Tests might exclude people from different cultural backgrounds and need to be approached with a level of caution.

- There appears to be a need to focus attention on ensuring that there is compliance to public service-wide policies across organisations. HR managers need to ensure that they play their role effectively. This requires that HR managers are active in the strategic process and that they resist people who want to by-pass essential rules in the recruitment process.

- The extent of trade-union involvement needs to be considered in the recruitment process. Trade-unions should be involved as part of a process of ensuring transparency. As observers in the recruitment process, trade-unions can ensure that good practices are used to appoint the best available candidate.

- The shortage of highly talented people may lead to “a trade off” between the process and actual outcomes of recruitment processes. There might be a need to sacrifice the process to ensure that the best available talent is recruited while still ensuring equity. In the case of Canada, a focus is being placed on changing practices and on marketing the public service as an employer of choice. Different and more creative initiatives are required for the recruitment process.

- A central challenge is to convince people that the public service is the place to work as many are not interested. This has led to efforts to recruit people from outside of the country. Some attention needs to be focused on creating a better environment for public servants and in ensuring that the public service is well marketed.

CHAPTER 4:
RETAINING A COMPETENT AND PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE

CHAPTER 4: RETAINING A COMPETENT AND PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the sub-theme Retaining a competent and productive public sector workforce, two presentations were made within plenary and three within focused commissions. The presentations in plenary and in commissions were followed by questions and discussion. In addition to summarising the presentations, the discussion and issues raised by participants are alluded to. In each case, the discussion issues are included after a summary of the actual presentations.

4.2 THE NATURE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENTS AND WHAT DRIVES IT: MR PETER REILLY, INSTITUTE FOR EMPLOYEE STUDIES, GREAT BRITAIN.

Engaged employees are employees who believe in the organisation and understand the overall context of the organisation. These are employees who respect their colleagues and are prepared to go the extra mile to bring added value to the organisation. Engagement is thus a positive attitude that an employee has for the organisation and is often reflected in enhanced performance. This is a two-way process that requires that the organisation works at nurturing the relationship.

Engagement is more than motivation as it entails having a sense of belonging. It is also more than commitment as it entails greater job satisfaction in a supportive environment where people are prepared to go the extra mile.

Engagement is a sense of commitment and a positive citizen-orientation to organisations. Engagement has a direct input (attendance and lower turnover) and output value (productivity and performance).

There are three levels in the engagement process. The first level entails a sense of belonging and involvement. The second level involves issues of salary and relationships with colleagues. The third level includes issues around management, performance and training and learning opportunities. Understanding the level of engagement requires the use of a diagnostics tool modelled on the framework presented.

The level of engagement often varies with the age and attitude of the individuals involved. Younger people have higher engagement needs. Organisations can work at understanding the different engagement requirements and establish appropriate interventions. Such interventions range from structural changes to changes in the performance and development intervention established. The central principle should be making employees feel valued and as part of a process.

Having considered the input by Mr Reilly that promotes employee work satisfaction as a retention mechanism the participants raised the following:

- The role of line managers is central to employee engagements. In particular, encouraging line managers to ensure that people are client focused helps to ensure that they are fully engaged. The direct engagement process allows people to have a positive sense of involvement in the work of the organisation. Getting people involved and engaged in large organisations does pose challenges. However, there are experiences which suggest that this is possible.

- The responsibility for engagement often resides with human resource managers and line managers. Performance appraisal systems are often too complex to operationalise. A good manager will use HRM tools to ensure that they serve to support and ensure employee engagement.

4.3 EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AS A RETENTION TOOL: MS OR RAMSINGH, DIRECTOR-GENERAL: OPSC

Performance management is rarely seen as an effective tool for the retention of people within the public service. The general orientation is to treat the system as a framework for establishing rewards or sanctions for lack of performance. In assessing the evolution of performance management in South Africa, it is imperative that there be recognition of the value of the system for the retention of employees.

An effective performance management system is central to human resource development. In addition to serving as a platform for personal growth, it can serve to assist people in having a sense of belonging and commitment to their organisation. A PSC study reveals that development opportunities are very high on people's perceptions of remaining or not remaining within particular organisations. An effective system also serves to shape the extent to which people are rewarded and recognised for positive performance within the public service.

There are a number of challenges in the application of performance management in the South African public service. Most grievances within the public service relate to the application of performance management systems.

There has been a tendency to consider performance processes and systems as a formalistic compliance issue, rather than as a substantive development intervention. Employees often complain about being in the dark on the performance evaluation, or not being assessed objectively within the process.

The proper and effective implementation of performance management is central to retention. Employees do not however see themselves as recipients of the system and need to exercise a level of ownership over the system and its application. A central element of responsibility also has to reside with the Human Resource section of an organisation. Their involvement in guiding the process and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations is essential to the success of the applied system.

Performance management must be seen as part of a comprehensive human resource management framework. It is a direct contributor to human resource development and remuneration. If given substantive attention it can be an effective tool for the retention and attraction of the best within the public service.

During Plenary there was robust debate about this application of performance management in the Public Service. The participants specifically highlighted the following:

- It is often a challenge to ensure objectivity in the performance appraisal process. Part of the challenge resides in the fact that not enough attention is focused on the initial outputs established. The prior discussions on the conditions for performance are never articulated and hence people find themselves with performance contracts that they cannot deliver on.

- Many of the grievances relate to the fact that performance management is not applied consistently. The situation points to the failure of managers to focus on the system and its proper application.

- There are different systems for different levels of employees in the public service. At the level of Director-General the process is managed by the PSC. However, the PSC does not make a decision on performance. The process entails the establishment of an assessment panel that advises the responsible Minister on the performance of a Director-General. In the performance assessment process, it is often difficult to distinguish the individual from the team. There is often a disjuncture between public perceptions of organisational performance and the assessment of specific Directors-General.

- The practice of peer review should be encouraged at the level of Directors-General. Directors-General are encouraged to ensure involvement in their panels from their colleagues. Instruments are available for wider evaluation, but often not used by public servants. There is need to encourage people to use a 360 degree approach for performance assessment. Dealing with poor performance is a challenge and in part related to the levels of delegation in the public service. Managers are often weak in the process and don't want to deal with poor performers.

4.4 COMMISSION 1: GENERATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES: MR DAVID ARCHER, DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, GOVERNMENT OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

The future and success of organisations will not be determined by a company's financial wealth or its technological capabilities but by how the company manages its human capital. Valuing human resources as the most critical component to organisational success requires organisations to

understand how to get the best out of its people. It further requires that human resource practitioners understand that people are different and different generations require different approaches.

When it comes to the workplace, people are more likely to be influenced by their career stage. People under 30 are often are looking for a good career fit and learning about their personal competencies. People between 30 and 45 tend to be career-oriented and to seek advancement. Those between 45 and 65 want to maintain their status and working at maximum potential and those above 65 tend to focus on retirement from their main career.

It is imperative that organisations recognise the generational differences and plan accordingly. General differences impact on the manner in which people are recruited and the extent to which they can be retained within organisations. Applying the same approaches to all will not serve to retain people as the needs are often very different. In this respect, differential approaches also allow us to think of ways of retaining people who are ready to retire in creative ways. Retention plans must be developed and be motivated by the employees themselves.

The participants at this Commission recognised the importance of succession planning and the difficulties associated with an ageing workforce. The following comments were made specifically:

- There is a need to focus attention on the empowerment of managers for specific human resource functions. However, HR professionals are still able to provide a service that is based on their level of detailed professional capacity. Whilst managers should have basic HR competencies, they don't necessarily have to do the work of HR professionals.

- Generational issues appear to be very specific to countries in the north. However, experiences suggest that HR professionals need to look carefully at the impact of societal trends on the organisation.

- There must be appreciation of the political context. HR professionals cannot be separated from the political process and need to perform in a responsive manner. Politics cannot and should not be seen as interference, but as something that needs to be managed. The relationship cannot be seen as adversarial.

- HR needs to focus attention on ensuring that line-managers do carry out their responsibilities. While HR managers may enjoy solving problems for managers, it might be more appropriate to ensure that line managers take responsibility for their actions and recognise the consequences of their actions. However, some managers don't have the required competencies and are not properly trained to work with and manage people.

- HR practitioners are often not involved in research and the generation of knowledge on HR practices and realities. HR practitioners should engage with theory and research. In any

profession, there is a need to engage the theory and the practice. This is how the profession can be taken forward.

- At the core of HR is developing people to reach the next level. At times too much attention is focused on bringing talent into the organisation, rather than building talent. Policies are necessary but sometimes there needs to be creativity within the framework of the policies. Where necessary and appropriate, policies need to be changed. The public service must create an environment where people may be challenged.

- Succession planning is difficult in South Africa, because senior levels are open to external competition. It is necessary to present the facts as they are, despite resistance from line managers. It is possible to introduce succession planning in an environment where open competition is encouraged.

4.5 COMMISSION 2: THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES FOR A HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE – BEN EYBERS, SENIOR EXECUTIVE, CAREWAYS GROUP

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) are directed at ensuring employee well-being by providing support to employees whose problems might impair their job performance. The initial phase of the process requires that there be buy-in from stakeholders and an identification of needs. Typically, many organisations source an external provider to assist the process. The second phase in the process involves establishing the budget and department to deal with these matters. The third phase is ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

In establishing an EAP it is essential that there be a focus on ensuring a one-stop service for employees. Services, and the manner in which they are provided, need to be integrated. In addition to counselling by telephone, there needs to be face to face interaction and "on the ground" resources. Careful attention needs to be focused on confidentiality and having the required capacity to assist employees with the problems identified.

In establishing EAPs there are some challenges. Old school management is predicated on ensuring a separation of personal problems from the workplace. A newer approach recognizes that well-being is essential for performance and sees it as more than just a compliance matter. This approach demonstrates that an organisation values its people.

In response to this presentation the participants commented as follows:

- Assistance programmes are generally done on a volunteer basis and there are issues of confidentiality that need to be considered in the reporting process. Reports should not make it

possible for managers to identify the individuals who are participating in the programme. Reports tend to be generic, but also depend on the requirements of managers. The initiative to attend EAP is voluntary although managers may refer people to the programme. If a person needs to attend but does not, it can reflect as a negative if action is taken on the performance of the individual.

- How do we prevent abuse of EAP initiatives? There is a tendency to abuse the benefits derived from participating in these programmes. Many people rely on assistance programmes as they don't have access to medical aid or cannot afford medical aid. Participation in EAPs can sometimes be used as an excuse for continuing non-performance.

- Establishing an EAP unit in a government department is a challenge. If people are not appointed at the right level, then it is difficult to get mangers to take these people seriously. There are courses available and it is possible that there will be more people with the relevant qualifications to fill EAP positions in the future. EAP interventions need to be managed carefully and interventions need to be limited as it is only a short-term solution.

4.6 COMMISSION 3: THE SERVICE VALUE CHAIN: ENGAGED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES BUILD CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS: MS RODA MCINNES, CONTRACTOR, CANADA

A number of research projects suggest that employee satisfaction is directly linked to the satisfaction of clients. Client satisfaction in turn leads to better overall performance. Within the framework of this conclusion, research was conducted across the service value chain to understand the correlation between employee satisfaction and citizen satisfaction.

Within the value chain it is imperative to look carefully at the key drivers of performance. The value chain is comprised of employee engagement, citizen satisfaction and trust/confidence in government institutions. The research conducted looks at the links between the three areas of the value chain and in particular at the key drivers. Research reveals a direct correlation between employee satisfaction, citizen satisfaction and the overall level of trust in government.

The research also focused on the key drivers within each part of the service cycle. At the level of employees, the key drivers include the level of engagement of employees by their organisations and issues of development and recognition. There is also a direct correlation between these issues and the key drivers of satisfaction from citizens. Hence, the research suggests creative interventions to support employee well-being as a strategy for improving service delivery.

Amongst the broader implications of the research is the need to focus on research and building an understanding of the key drivers within the service value chain. Training people in leadership is also

essential. Part of the process of building confidence and trust is establishing effective strategies for reporting on progress and improvements in the service experiences of citizens. Each service experience represents “a moment of truth” for government and the public service.

The correlation between high levels of service delivery and content public servants was found to be an interesting reason for staff retention by participants. In response to questions, Ms McInnis provided the following further clarification:

- There is a move towards integrated service delivery. This process is often driven by technology and there are efforts to create service centres that provide services from two levels of government. The nature of service backlogs and its definition differs between South Africa and Canada. In some areas, access to services is limited, but not on the same scale as in South Africa.

- The heads of institutions are on contract, but are often permanent officials. Contracts are renewed on a three year basis. Career public servants would move to other positions if their contracts are not renewed. Often innovation requires that people focus on using resources more effectively.

- The model attempts to incorporate both process and outcomes. Measurement is focused on tangible experiences, which include perceptions and real outcomes. The methodology is fairly complex and involves a series of questions to understand the level of employee engagement.

CHAPTER 5:
ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

CHAPTER 5: ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the sub-theme dealing with effective and sustainable development of public servants, two presentations were made within plenary and three within focused commissions. The presentations in plenary and in commissions were followed by questions and discussions. In addition to summarising the presentations, the discussions and issues raised by participants are discussed. In each case, the discussion issues are included after a summary of the actual presentations.

5.2 CAPACITY BUILDING CHALLENGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MR MPHO MAKORO, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF BATHOKWA LABOUR LAW AND HR CONSULTANTS, SOUTH AFRICA

The Local Government Systems Act, 32 of 2000, gives the Department of Provincial and Local Government powers to develop regulations on capacity building and training within municipal administrations. Capacity within local municipalities is a challenge as a result of competition for limited skills, the general lack of skills and undue political influence in the operations of municipalities.

A central strategic response to these realities is the conducting of a comprehensive skills audit in municipalities. Coupled with this, there are strategies being established to assist rural municipalities to recruit and retain the skills required. Municipalities confront many challenges with respect to the application of performance management systems.

In addition to establishing standards for performance management, government has introduced programmes directed at ensuring a hands-on approach to supporting identified municipalities. This includes deploying skilled officials from different spheres of government and the private sector. A set of minimum requirements for senior managers and competency-profiling exists. A long-term intervention will be the establishment of uniformity in employment conditions and practices across all spheres of government.

The complexities of relationships and mobility between different spheres of government were discussed by the participants. In particular the following were raised:

- There is a need to balance new capacity with the challenge of building on existing capacities for delivery at local government level. Whilst new people from other spheres of government might bring a different orientation, they do not always understand the realities of the operations within local government institutions.

- The idea of a single system is to provide opportunities for people to be deployed at different levels to resolve the challenges that are being experienced. The system is also expected to facilitate the seamless delivery of services to citizens. In practice, this should also assist in the

process of ensuring that major service delivery challenges within local government organisations are resolved through vertical and horizontal redeployment amongst the different spheres of government.

5.3 THE HUMAN FACTOR IN BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: LEADERSHIP CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PERSPECTIVE IN AFRICA: MR JOHN-MARY KAUZYA, UNITED NATIONS

Africa is caught up in a complex development situation in which it is being pushed by globalisation while at the same time having to develop its people and get them out of the claws of abject poverty. One of the assets required for governments to sail through these two waves is trust. Global governance has shifted the paradigm in terms of skills, knowledge, networks, mindsets and attitudes, as well as management and capacity development institutional arrangements.

Developing leaders that will ensure that Africa plays a leading role in the world is in itself a challenge for leaders not only in Africa at national, regional or even community levels, but also at international levels. The focus should be on developing motivated, effective and responsible young leaders across Africa in the public, private, and civil society sectors that are capable of guiding their countries as they struggle to align the demands of globalisation with local development visions and strategies. The first aspect of this challenge concerns succession planning which is preparation for leadership in the affairs of managing a country.

Leadership is probably the most significant aspect of the human resource management in government and is crucial to engineering and sustaining trust in the institutions of government. The leadership styles or qualities that may be embedded in the philosophy, culture, traditions and behaviour of African leaders, should complement current western based leadership styles. Building adequate administrative leadership capacities in relation to the mastery of laws, rules, regulations and procedures, as well as transparency, accountability, ethics integrity and professionalism is critical for the sustainability of the rule of law, public trust and democratic governance.

A well-balanced leader has an appropriate mix of integrative, entrepreneurial, administrative, and operative abilities supported by adequate knowledge, skills, and networks, in a character that is driven by appropriate values and attitude. The task of getting Africa out of poverty will continue to be tough and complex and it will require complex leadership at all levels, in all sectors and in all organisations.

Current and future government leaders can have their leadership capacity developed. It is a matter of adopting the appropriate approaches and methodologies. In fact, the more the current top leadership are ready to undergo capacity building activities, the more they are likely to be seen as honest and realistic in accepting their capacity limitations and therefore worthy of the trust of the people. Amongst the strategies that can be established for leadership development are visioning workshops, coaching, staff exchanges and study visits.

The participants reflected on the difficulties of building leadership capacity in African public services as well as the need for leadership to play an active role in developmental issues. The following were specifically mentioned:

- Is there a correlation between the levels of trust in government and the levels of poverty? There might be situations where, as government works towards improving the lives of people, this results in growing expectations creating trust challenges. The relationship between trust and government is often simply an issue of government delivering on the promises made. Not delivering on promises creates a level of mistrust.

- Leadership needs to permeate all levels of society. Leadership is exercised by common people and needs to be recognised. The approach to leadership is about building such capabilities across society. The idea is not to create a situation where the focus of attention is only on leaders who hold political office.

5.4 COMMISSION 1: ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES: MR WELMAN, SAMDI

Service delivery in South Africa is closely linked to appropriately skilled human resources. Within this terrain, integration and coherence between different role players in HRD affect the relevance and delivery of training. For development interventions to be sustainable, they require more than training and should include organisational development as well as learning networks. Broad government interventions serve to shape operational plans within departments. These plans form the core of individual work plans and the framework within which assessments can be made of the skills required for performance.

It is imperative that HR planning informs the development programme of departments together with workplace skills plans. There needs to be commitment to invest in skills development linked to career planning. Of critical importance is building a culture of lifelong learning. A key overall element of government strategy is located within the framework of established Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). In addition to providing resources for capacity building, the relevant SETA establishes a framework of standards and a process for quality assurance.

Departments and other public sector organisations must identify key strategic skills shortages and priorities as well as opportunities for learnership development and skills development. Departments are often unable to work out what skills are required in relation to their policies. There is often poor monitoring and evaluation of skills plans and their application within departments.

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) is in the process of establishing an Academy. A key orientation of the Academy is to ensure portability of skills to facilitate redeployment within a single public service. A key strategy is to ensure standardised training and the utilization

of training providers within and outside of the public service. Materials development and quality assurance will also be key drivers in the provision of training. The Academy will be essential in the monitoring and evaluation of training provision. In addition to training for new entrants in the public service, substantive attention will be focused on ensuring effective programmes for senior managers and short programmes and events for all levels of officials.

The pursuant discussion by the Conference participants and the responses to their questions focussed on the following:

- There is a shift towards using learning as opposed to training across the world. In this respect, there needs to be consideration of the value of training provided. Funding is often received for training and evaluations are conducted after introducing pilot training programmes. Before training is rolled-out, evaluations are conducted to ensure that the training is relevant.

- The values of the Constitution are fundamental to the public service and there is a need to reflect on the role of training in promoting these values and ensuring that people understand the basics of public service work.

- SAMDI is introducing an induction programme to ensure people understand the nature of public service. Different methodologies need to be used to build the culture and values that are required. There is a need to look carefully at the reality of job-hopping in the public service.

- It is important to have plans to ensure that people receive the training that would facilitate their development. Accelerated development programmes are being introduced, but need to be supported by other activities within organisations. SAMDI's work is guided by the activities of the SETA. All curricula have to be approved by the relevant committees of the SETA.

- SAMDI looks carefully at the work-place skills plans and government priorities when designing training programmes. A training evaluation and impact study was conducted in the provinces. The findings pointed to the fact that training could not be fully applied because of organisational realities. Cross-cutting issues are included in the training programmes introduced. Careful attention is also focused on ensuring that SAMDI ensures good gender representation in its programmes.

5.5 COMMISSION 2: ACTION LEARNING – A MORE EFFECTIVE MODEL FOR PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT CAPACITY BUILDING? MR TIM HOUGH, AFRICA INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR, SOUTH AFRICA

The Action Learning intervention in the South African public service is reflected in project Khaedu. The presentation focused on the implementation of Khaedu. The project was founded after a survey on the effectiveness of Batho Pele in 2003. During this survey, some departments demonstrated

service delivery improvements, but most tended to see Batho Pele as an isolated set of principles. The Khaedu design was influenced by an action learning format for practical skills development.

The Khaedu initiative is aligned to the service improvement plans of government and entails formal training over 4 to 5 days and a week-long deployment to a service delivery coal face. Over 900 people have participated in the programme and it has started to demonstrate some success. This is reflected in the work conducted in KwaZulu-Natal and the deployment reports produced by provincial officials.

Consideration may be given to establishing an Action Learning Centre. The central focus for intervention might be Provincial Growth and Development Strategies. The focus would be on ensuring the strategy's success, rather than on individual education and resumé building. The intervention needs to be tailored and linked to solving particular problems identified within the strategies.

Conference participants took note with interest of the developments to introduce senior managers to the realities at the coal face of service delivery. The ensuing discussion raised the following prominent issues:

- One of the most important elements of action learning is its linkages to the core work of the department. Reshuffling is done with a view that there will be some additional impact on the work of the department. The training provided often serves to bridge the gaps that might exist between senior managers and junior officials. Experiences are very positive.

- Reports are often taken very seriously at the provincial level. However, the experience is very different at national level, where emphasis is placed on the participation of heads of department (HODs) and senior managers tend to buy-in to the process.

- There is a compliance orientation in many instances. However, in this process it is essential to build the confidence of managers.

- There is a need to focus attention on ensuring that training is linked to the realities that people confront in their workplaces and that they are able to make contributions after the training process. It is essential that there is honesty about what can be achieved from any training initiative. Sometimes it takes time before the value of training and learning can be recognised. Other times officials are faced with the reality that plans change on an ongoing basis and new initiatives are introduced regularly.

- It is essential to focus attention on how the action learning momentum could be sustained. There needs to be further emphasis in action learning within training and higher education institutions. It is important to recognise the centrality of people to the action learning process. The institutionalisation of action learning is proving very positive and usually follows from commitments from HODs. Some of the training programmes being introduced are fairly limited and are not linked to practical experiences.

5.6 COMMISSION 3: SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DONOR AGENCIES TO HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: MS QUAN-MIN CHAU, GTZ

GTZ as a primary donor for the South African and many other African public services reflected in its assistance with capacity building.

Reducing poverty and increasing living standards depends on substantial resources and efforts. However, the situation in many developing countries demonstrates that there is often a lack of capacity to improve people's lives. It has been found that African countries need to improve the performance of their public sectors if they are going to achieve their goals of growth, poverty reduction, and the provision of better services. The increase in projects dealing with public service human resource development indicates a shift in this direction.

Public service personnel and institutions form the prerequisite to a democratic state based on the rule of law, with specific criteria for good governance. The German support in relation to capacity building for the public service includes organisational and human resource development to enhance partner organisations' capacities to plan and implement development strategies and policies. The GTZ sees capacity development as the process of strengthening the abilities or capacities of individuals, organisations and societies to make effective and efficient use of resources in order to achieve their goals on a sustainable basis.

The development of skills is necessary but not enough. It is recognized from experience that if no policies are in place to retain the staff you want to retain, the best performers will leave. The effort and money that went into skills development will then be used for individual benefit but not for the public service or public benefit. Establishing an organisational culture that is conducive to retention of skills is important.

These are just a few examples of what is needed for a more strategic approach to HR development in the public service. The measures promoting an individual person's competence development can only be seen within the aim of shaping organisational development. The nature of reform programs for the public service requires a transformation of public administration and its individuals.

As GTZ is a prominent donor in the South African public service, there was active participation by conference participants in the ensuing discussions. In particular the following issues were raised and responses to questions given:

- Funding for training needs to be informed by the realities experienced within institutions. Often the training being provided does not specifically address the needs of the organisation. In the support provided to SAMDI, the training interventions were preceded by an analysis of needs. In the case of the induction programme, all departments were invited to provide inputs on

what is required for introducing new public servants into the workplace. Only after needs are fully defined is there a design of the curriculum.

- Support for training is generally defined through a partnership with the relevant national institutions. In the case of capacity building and training, the partnership is with DPSA and SAMDI. In South Africa, the focus is on the national level. GTZ is constrained by the realities of its programme focus, but there is often room for looking at other opportunities. The support at the national level is expected to permeate and benefit all provinces. There are some donors who provide funding directly to provinces.

- Support is provided for the development of a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure training is effective. The evaluation focuses on the provider as well as the people who are sent to the programme. At times, department's don't send the correct people for training. In all training programmes, attention is focused on ensuring that action plans are developed by participants. Where necessary, focus groups are introduced to ensure that the training is effective and that the lessons learned can be shared widely.

CHAPTER 6:
BUILDING THE IDEAL WORKFORCE: FUTURE CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

CHAPTER 6: BUILDING THE IDEAL WORKFORCE: FUTURE CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the sub-theme on building the ideal workforce, two presentations were made within plenary and three within focused commissions. The presentations in plenary and in commissions were followed by questions and discussions. In addition to summarising the presentations, the discussions and issues raised by participants are included. Within this theme, the three Commission presentations were made in plenary. Discussions took place only after the three presentations.

6.2 TOWARDS WORKFORCE ARCHITECTURE: NEW APPROACHES TO DETERMINING WHAT IT TAKES IN STAFFING TERMS TO GET THE WORK DONE: MR JOHN LAVELLE, WORLD BANK

Existing workforce planning approaches are limited and might not be able to respond to unfolding global and local challenges. There is a need to think differently about workforce planning. It is the foundation for human resource management. It is often poorly done and not a strategic driver for institutional change.

There is a need to move beyond the existing rhetoric. This includes notions of human capital and the trapping of individuals within organisations. The reality is that whilst all people are needed, they might not always be relevant to the life of the organisation. In practice, some people are more important than others and this does not always show in the planning process. Workforce planning is becoming more analytical, but is still dominated by planning, rather than actual analysis for management decision-making.

There is a need to think of the skills required rather than just the actual people needed. The second question is how difficult are the skills and are they generally available?

The third issue is what are the most optimal employment relationships to acquire and retain the required skills? This relates in part to the branding of the organisation. This requires honesty on the importance of people to the organisation at particular points in time.

Within the World Bank, the approach has been to segment the requirements to distinguish between high skills and lower skills. This requires distinguishing between skills that are difficult to acquire and those that are easy to acquire. The segmentation allows for the shaping of the strategy of the bank in acquiring and retaining people. This allows for the shaping of the life-cycle of employees. The segmentation allows for different strategies for different types of skill areas and levels. People with high skills and values require a different approach and often leave very rapidly and don't have a strong interest in organisational performance processes. In the area of low skills, back office, the approach has been to outsource to India, as it is more effective. The Bank also brings in lower level high performers for a two year period.

The differences between an organisation such as the World Bank and a public service were highlighted during the ensuing discussions. It was recognised, however, that there are parallels that can be drawn:

- The nature of who is important to an organisation varies across types of organisations. In some instances, the frontline person is considered the most important because of the interaction with customers/clients. Importance is sometimes linked to the difficulty of acquiring specific skills. Whilst frontline people might be important, they are not difficult to acquire.

- It can be negative for morale and motivation when the importance of individuals is downplayed even if some skills are more relevant and important than others. In this respect, it is always better to be honest so that employees know where they stand.

- We need to think in collective terms when looking at organisational performance. This approach is relevant when thinking about the labour market and not institutional performance. All individuals are important for organisational performance, but some are more important from a labour market point of view as they can be easily replaced.

6.3 MANAGEMENT OF REFORM INITIATIVES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE SECTOR: PROFESSOR JO KUYE, SCHOOL OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The presentation focussed on the imperatives for reform in the public sector from the perspective of institutions of higher learning. It is important to start on the premise that no government has achieved all its reform efforts. At the most basic level, the public service and government must respond to the realities of service delivery. Trust and leadership are central to public service delivery.

In the reform process we need to think carefully of the terrain of reform and return to the most basic functions and operations of government. In practice most managers spend their time on basic operational functions. We also need to make distinctions between effectiveness and efficiency. The reform process is continuous and needs to be seen as such.

Reform must be about ensuring that functional and operational activities are linked. All people have some responsibilities of leadership and management. The task of management is similar across sectors, but there are different contextual realities in government.

Reform in South Africa has been a continuous process. There are problems in the area of delegation. The tendency has been to focus on administrative activities in the reform process and not on people issues.

Debate on the subject was limited. It was, however, pointed out that there is often a challenge when it comes to the students provided by institutions of higher learning. The reality often is

that students don't interact with the realities of government and are not exposed to the actual operations of government. An effective strategy would be to establish further internship programmes for students.

6.4 IMPROVING PUBLIC SECTOR PERFORMANCE: A NEW PUBLIC FINANCE PERSPECTIVE: MATHEW SIMMONDS, CHIEF DIRECTOR: FISCAL POLICY, NATIONAL TREASURY

The presentation predominantly focused on future challenges for public sector employment in terms of the economic realities.

The public sector is not performing at the levels required. The poor performance has been negative for growth and development. If the situation persists, we will be left with a small elite and a dual economy. This requires that the state is able to intervene effectively and is able to deliver services. There are flaws in many of our performance and human resource systems and punishment for bad performance is rare.

Amongst the constraints for growth is the overall performance of the state. The level of government consumption on salaries is fairly high in terms of international standards. The outcomes, relative to the ratios presented, are fairly low. In many instances, government departments are poorly managed and good performance is an isolated occurrence. Good performance is not rewarded and many face difficult bureaucratic systems in the delivery process.

There have been many positive developments including changing the overall budgeting and financial management process. However, many services have fallen short of actual expectations and the resources provided. Part of the failure resides in the difficulties of monitoring, evaluation and measurement.

Budgeting and financial systems are directed at ensuring that people report on outputs and outcomes. The assumption was that people would then be held accountable. This approach has not worked as planned. In many instances, managers don't have the required authority to manage and the planning and reporting systems might be too complex.

The South African public service is relatively well paid by international standards. The data suggests that the public service is not productive. The minimum wage bill is twice the per capita GDP. In terms of current spending on wages, there is a need for increases in productivity to ensure effective change. Additional skilled professionals need to be brought in without increasing the wage bill.

This might require changes in the salary structure and the progression process. Wages at lower levels are high, but tend not to be attractive at senior levels. Career planning might assist in retaining people and ensuring that there is effective progression over time. This can be introduced by lowering the entry level salaries and ensuring that as people progress their salaries improve.

The conference participants raised concerns about the negative slant of the presentation especially as far as service delivery is concerned. Whilst it is important to note the challenges, there are many positive developments. In many instances, there is a failure to recognize that there have been many public service successes over the past ten years.

6.5 OPTIMISING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN ALL THREE SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT: MS COLLETTE CLARK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DPSA

The presentation focussed on the creation of a single Public Service. The government of SA has focused enormous efforts on building a strong developmental state that can systematically, over time, achieve the politically defined outcomes. The state is reliant on the strength and capability of the system of government in place to successfully implement the range of programs designed to respond to developmental challenges. From the citizen's perspective, the state is constitutionally bound to ensure that services are effectively delivered. This challenges the state to find the most effective methods and channels to deliver these services.

The needs of citizens, relative to the manner in which government is organized, calls for a decisive break-out from the old fashioned single department, single service point model of service delivery toward a dynamic, modern delivery system that begins to cluster these services, for the convenience of the citizen, through a single window, be this a physical structure or in cyberspace. In this respect, the institutions across the three spheres which comprise the machinery of state have to be strategically aligned and harmonized to complement one another so as to more effectively fulfil the needs of society. Such arrangements will enhance government's service delivery approach.

This approach is underpinned by an effort to create government institutions which are accessible, efficient, representative, accountable, sustainable and responsive to service delivery needs. In addition, those providing services should have a clear understanding of the people, their needs and the services they require and should be located as close as possible to the people. The single public service initiative is directed at responding to the needs of citizens by ensuring that the vision of seamless service delivery is achieved. The strategy places emphasis on the responsibilities of provincial and local government as the first point of contact between government and citizens and it supports the creation of a common culture of service delivery.

At the level of human resource management, the biggest challenge is the high vacancy rate and the difficulties of attracting and retaining the required skills for effective delivery. Amongst the responses are skills development initiatives and the development of public service training institutions. A further challenge is the mobility of skills. In this respect careful attention is focused on harmonizing conditions of service to assist mobility. As part of the process, consideration is also given to initiatives within the senior management service.

The single public service initiative will culminate in the introduction of relevant legislation and the amendment of existing legislation. It is anticipated that this will happen by September 2007.

In the ensuing discussion the following was highlighted:

- There is a need to focus attention on the political level of integration for a single public service. In practice there might be a disjuncture between the establishment of a single public service and the current political configuration.

- In reflecting on the complexity of structures and layers in the pubic service, there is a need to understand that there is no "one-size-fits-all solution". The DPSA is in the process of developing some guidance on this matter, but the issues are very complex and require innovation on the part of departments. There is a need to ensure there is congruence between the plans and structures of departments. It is useful to note that the Shared Services Centre approach of the Gauteng Government is working and stands as an example of greater efficiencies derived from shared services.

6.6 BUILDING A MODERN PUBLIC SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA- FROM JOB EVALUATION AND BUREAUCRACY TO EFFECTIVE DECISION STRUCTURES, MULTI-SKILLED TEAMS AND REAL JOBS: MR TIM HOUGH, AFRICA INTERNATIONAL ADVISERS, SOUTH AFRICA

The presentation focussed on the need to move away from bureaucratic decision-making structures that impact negatively on delivery. Views of the current organisational ethos in the public service differ. There is much to suggest that public servants are like conscripts who turn up because they don't have a choice, and are uncooperative and unenthusiastic about their work. Changing the culture has been a key element of project Khaedu.

There are a number of actual examples of the challenges that are confronted within the public service. What is essential is establishing strategies to overcome the challenges. In particular there is a need for added focus on the frameworks and systems for delegations and decision-making. Such an analysis would serve to avoid the existing scenario where many middle managers are seen as post-boxes, rather than officials actively involved in the service process. There is also an absence of team work and organisations are held hostage to absenteeism.

Lessons can be learned from large public service transformation exercises within the country. The South African Revenue Service, for example, introduced a multi-stage assessment process for selected jobs in its new structure. In so doing, attention was focused on testing for potential and specific functional skills. The central issue that needs to be addressed is whether a team-based approach could serve to establish a better and more nurturing work environment in the South African public service. The conference participants were in agreement that the public service needs to find ways to work smarter and not harder.

6.7 HUMAN RESOURCE TRANSFORMATION: MR. OSCAR JACKSON AND MR. NEIL RECHENBERG, IPMA-HR.

IPMA-HR has been involved in an ongoing survey of human resource issues for a number of years. The specific issues covered change over the years. The survey provides some rich data, but the focus for the presentation was only on some of the findings that emerged from the survey. The data collected from the different surveys is available on the website of IPMA-HR.

One of the key findings from the survey conducted in the United States was that in the public service environment there are many challenges in attracting and retaining people. In this respect, there was not much attention focused on the possibilities of outsourcing to resolve some of the skills and capacity attraction challenges. In general respondents recognized that there was a need for assistance in conducting HR planning. The survey also revealed a concern with more effective learning and engagements between HR peers.

One of the major challenges from the surveys relates to the issue of the strategic positioning of human resources. The survey reveals that HR professionals were not particularly valued for strategic guidance issues within the organisation. This reality is linked to the fact that very few of the respondents indicated that they had strategic HR plans in place. The need for management support for HR activities was considered very important by respondents.

One of the larger challenges identified is the lack of development and engagements with new technologies. This is related to the reality that HR is often not seen as a priority in the budgeting process. As many don't see HR as strategic, there is a lack of resources to focus on the important dimensions of HR. the surveys conducted provide a wide range of information on HR practices in the United States that might have some relevance to African countries.

The conference participants recognised the valuable lessons that can be drawn from surveys of this nature.

CHAPTER 7:
MANAGING HR IN POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES: A CASE-STUDY OF SOUTHERN SUDAN

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

At the request of the World Bank a Case Study on managing HR in the post conflict Southern Sudan was included on the programme of the Conference. The Case Study was presented by the Honourable David Deng Athorbei, Minister for Labour, Public Service & Human Resource Development, Government of Southern Sudan.

7.2 PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDY

The conflict in Sudan has been ongoing for some time. The recent conflict was largely over oil resources and feelings of marginalisation amongst the Southern Sudanese. A comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 and served to create the foundation for establishing an effective government. Central to the peace process was the sharing of power and wealth. The overall strategy was to mainstream Southern Sudan into national development and to establish the basis for fiscal decentralization to Southern Sudan. Of particular importance to the peace process was the delivery of basic infrastructure and services.

As part of the strategy, a common public service act and regulations were developed. This provided a basis for the horizontal integration of former soldiers, current employees of the government and the bringing in of new employees, including those from the Diaspora. The approach was to ensure merit and rule-based recruitment and promotion with due consideration for issues of representivity and gender sensitivity. The basic approach was to reverse the outflow of skills and knowledge.

Amongst the interventions introduced was a substantive focus on training, employment through public investment and the growth of small and medium enterprises. In addition, attention was focused on building public and civil society capacity for the delivery of basic services. As part of the process, a phased administrative and fiscal decentralization process has been established. Of particular importance in the initial stage is the affordability of the public service. The salary burden is fairly significant and stands at around 20 to 25 percent of expenditure.

Frameworks for effective accountability and governance have been established. Legislatures have been empowered in the ten states and a five-tier judicial structure has been created. The public financial management processes have been established on the basis of international best practices. In addition, nineteen empowered oversight agencies have been created. Transparency has been encouraged through legislation and all ten states and 78 country level governments are functional.

A number of donor initiatives have been established to supplement the capacity of the government. Recently the funding provided has been included in the government's expenditure framework. A number of experts have been brought in as part of the process of establishing the government. In addition to bringing in temporary project capacity, attention was also focused on introducing

training and long–term institutional development support. A number of donors are involved in the capacity development initiatives. In addition to efforts directed at communication, government is in the process of establishing a website, ensuring email access and electronic records and document management. Capacity building is at the centre of efforts directed at ensuring that there is a dividend to peace and hence the avoidance of future conflicts.

7.3 DISCUSSION OF THE CASE STUDY

The participants expressed their gratitude to the Minster for travelling to South Africa to share such eye-opening experiences. In particular the following noteworthy comments were made:

- It appears that there is a need to engage with NEPAD and other possibilities to assist the Government of Southern Sudan. These possibilities are being looked at, but the reality is that the government is in the process of establishing itself and needs to focus attention on enhanced communication to invite other parties to assist the process. The government is focused on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and hence provides an opportunity for others to be involved. Creating the channels for communication is essential.

- One of the biggest challenges is to establish a government from the ground-up. There is a need for being strategic to ensure that there is a focus on those things that will help in the long-term. The tendency of donors is to focus on emergency issues and not on long-term human resource development issues. Attention is focused on ensuring that Southern Sudan does not become dependent on donors. In practice, donor resources are being matched by the Government of South Sudan.

- Whilst retaining a merit system in appointments, attention is focused on ensuring that marginalised groups benefit. Local government institutions are being designed, but currently the focus is on local administration as opposed to local government. There are five tiers in the government of Southern Sudan. The education of women is a challenge in Southern Sudan and requires that there be assistance from other African women.

- The Southern Sudan situation provides an opportunity for HR managers to do it right. Southern Sudan does not really need financial assistance, but requires experience from other countries and skills for developing the right frameworks for long term sustainability. In addressing the issue of corruption, the government has demonstrated a commitment to ensure that donor assistance does not result in increased corruption. The challenge is to ensure that Sudan has systems to control resources and avoid a situation where there is a large flow of cash without proper accounting. The focus on quality for pubic service is very important.

CHAPTER 8:
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

The key issues from each of the thematic focus areas of the conference have been extracted to provide a basis for future engagements. The summary that follows attempts to provide a focused perception on the critical issues that emerged from each of the sub-themes of the conference. The conclusions provide an overall perspective on the conference theme. The summary and conclusions represents an interpretation of issues and trends from the rapporteur's perspective and do not reflect the views of the conference organisers.

8.2 SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE SUB–THEMES

Careful attention was focused on ensuring that the issues identified serve to reflect both the content of the deliberations and the issues articulated during the discussions or question sessions after each of the presentations.

8.2.1 SUB-THEME ONE: CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT

The HRM function must be exercised in the context of the challenges of globalisation and the realities of a developmental state. This requires flexibility and the targeting of scarce skills areas coupled with programme and project management skills.

Good recruitment practices suggest that the public service needs to be established as the employer of choice. In attracting the best talent for public service work, attention needs to be focused on the tools utilised for recruitment and the manner in which the public service is communicated and branded. The value of public service must be articulated and retained within the recruitment process.

The affirmative action agenda needs to be sustained through a more targeted approach to recruitment and retention. In striving to achieve established targets, further attention should be focused on ensuring that space is created for people with disabilities and that they are sourced through effective partnership with institutions that represent their interests.

Human resource planning or workforce planning is fundamental to establishing effective human resource strategies and asserting the importance of human resources for the overall direction of an organisation. Recruitment should thus not be seen as the filling of jobs, but as a continuous investment in a high quality workforce capable of accomplishing the organisation's mission now and in the future.

8.2.2 SUB-THEME TWO: RETAINING A COMPETENT AND PRODUCTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE

Effective employee engagement and the empowerment of employees could serve as an effective strategy for ensuring job satisfaction and employee retention. Employees who participate in organisational processes and who are involved in the shaping of their work also serve to build public confidence and improved service delivery.

The value of performance management as a retention and development framework needs to be recognised. This requires that there be a shift away from a formalistic procedural and compliance orientation to performance management. Performance management and the establishment of appropriate objectives and indicators must be recognised as fundamental to the performance of departments and central to building an effective developmental state.

Within the workforce planning process, careful attention needs to be focused on the needs and challenges that confront different employees. The diversity of employees suggests that there needs to be some flexibility in the manner in which recruitment and retention practices are shaped.

The concept of Employee Assistance Programmes is positive and serves to ensure that problems can be resolved before they impact negatively on productivity. In introducing such programmes, care needs to be taken to ensure that the programme does not serve as a protective framework for poor performance.

8.2.3 SUB-THEME THREE: ENSURING EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

Active participation in shaping the direction and content of training is fundamental to ensure that training is responsive to the realities that confront public service organisations. Active training interventions are required at all levels and need to be balanced with ensuring that departments work at establishing the required environment for absorbing and supporting the training provided to individuals.

Building leadership capabilities is fundamental to the future of public service and active service delivery. Active leadership development interventions are required at all levels of the public service and need to incorporate commitments to effective succession planning.

Action learning provides an effective platform for building the capacity of individuals and for resolving challenges within the service delivery process. The introduction of action learning methodologies provides government with an opportunity to drive forward the agenda of resolving public service challenges and at the same time contributing to the building of individual capabilities.

8.2.4 SUB-THEME FOUR: BUILDING THE IDEAL WORKFORCE: FUTURE CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Within the workforce planning process, attention needs to be focused on the skills required and the levels of complexity involved in acquiring skills. The recognition that some skills are more difficult to acquire than others could assist in shaping the recruitment and retention strategies.

The value of reflective theory on public service human resources management practices needs to be appreciated and recognised. In recognising the value of theory, attention needs to be focused on structuring relations with higher education institutions that serve to ensure that students are knowledgeable about the functioning and operations of public service organisations.

The consequences of poor human resource management and performance practices have an impact on fiscal stability and the resources available for services. Whilst recognising the positive elements of public service reform, careful attention needs to be focused on the consequences of poor productivity and performance on the retention and attraction of necessary skills and talent.

The movement towards a single public service is fundamental to effective and seamless service delivery. The initiative has wider implications for human resource management and requires that HR practitioners begin to grapple with some of the implications and shape their strategies accordingly.

Surveys on development within public service human resource management are fairly revealing and provide a good indicator of trends and interventions required to support human resource managers. Whilst surveys from other contexts provide interesting insights, they establish the need for more effective local and developing country research.

8.3 CONCLUSION

The experiences and human resource challenges of Southern Sudan, as presented during the conference, served to reinforce the centrality of the overall conference theme for the deliberations and future reflection on human resource management. Building public sector human resource capacity in a developmental state is a complex endeavour and requires a balance between the application of basic practices and the infusion of innovation.

Globalisation creates different demands and pressures on developing and developed countries. Whilst the deliberations and dialogue suggest common threads that bind human resource practitioners, they also create a platform for recognising a diversity of needs. Whilst developed country practitioners are struggling with new demographic related challenges, developing country practitioners struggle with a combination of skills shortages, establishing basic systems and developing innovative responses to the challenges of globalisation.

Whilst the conference is located within the ambits of learning and knowledge exchange, it also serves to establish the importance of research in human resource management. Whilst engagements in primary research is fundamental, the realities and immediacy of human resource delivery challenges suggest that research and theory construction needs to be a feature of everyday action amongst human resource practitioners.

Establishing global mirrors and building the global community in public sector human resource management is essential and provides an essential platform for reflection and learning. The engagements within the global community have to be predicated on a substantive understanding of local realities and a demonstration of local knowledge that is more than anecdotal. The equalisation of relations requires that the interactions move the conventional donor-recipient relations.

In addition to serving as a record of the deliberation of the conference, it is anticipated that this report will help to shape the direction of future interactions on public sector human resource management. The report should also serve as a framework for future action and for motivating practitioners to engage in further reflection in their efforts to establish the centrality of human resource management for organisational strategy.

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