

**Working Group I: Public Administration Capacity: Institutional and Human
Resource Development**

6 April 2011 – Conference Room 3

The Working Group elected Ms. Odette Ramsingh as the Chairperson and Mr. Philip Yeo as the Rapporteur.

Dr. Kauzya, Chief of the Public Administration Capacity Branch (PACB) made a presentation on the strategic direction and thematic focus of the Public Administration Capacity Branch. He gave a brief account of the involvement of CEPA members in past activities of the Branch and mentioned some of the constraints associated with the effective involvement of CEPA members, such as the availability of members to take part in a specific activity and lack of financial resources.

Nevertheless some members of CEPA have successfully participated in various activities of the Branch. Among these, there is the capacity building workshop on human resource management in Africa, where two CEPA members from the Region took part; and a panel on Standard of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training in Asia that was also attended by two CEPA members from the region. In this respect, an appeal was made to CEPA members to help the Branch replicate this practice in other regions of the world.

The Group discussed in detail innovation in public administration, especially the United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA) and the draft outline of the Guidance Tool-kit on Reconstructing Public Administration after Conflict.

With regard to UNPSA, the following points were raised and some recommendations were advanced by some members:

(a) Innovation in the public sector should be taken as a process of human resource development instead of a stand alone event;

(b) A segment of CEPA meeting should be devoted to the past results of the UNPSA in order to demonstrate what works and why with a view to creating a knowledge management platform; and

(c) The United Nations Public Service Awards constitute a rich source of innovation in the public sector. They also constitute demonstration that some public servants are responding to the call for public sector performance improvement. Therefore, the winning cases should be infused in capacity building workshops, to enhance opportunity to share experiences and learning. Also the winning cases of UNPSA should be used as case studies at universities with the aim of linking the work of CEPA with academia.

(d) However it was noted that it seems that some countries or regions have the monopoly of UNPSA and it is important to open the competition to the maximum number of countries possible. The importance of disseminating information on UNPSA widely cannot be emphasized enough. It would be also be crucial to prepare a guideline on how to present a project for entry to the UNPSA in order to facilitate and encourage countries that have never applied do so.

(e) While in principle it was found feasible to create a category of the UNPSA for post-conflict countries, it was cautioned that expanding the categories of UNPSA could be problematic and complex.

(f) One needs more time and commitment in order to implement this initiative and the financial aspect is also important. If the target is public service in post conflict countries, there are already many success stories that could be replicated.

In introducing the Tool-kit on Reconstructing Public Administration after conflict, Dr. Kauzya stated that although the Division has worked in several post conflict countries successfully, such as Rwanda, South Africa, Angola, Kosovo and Timore Leste, it was not possible to produce until now a methodology that serves as a guideline in the reconstruction of the public service in post-conflict countries.

An outline of the “Toolkit on Reconstructing Public Administration after Conflict” is being prepared to provide guidance and answer pertinent questions. Although it is in its first phase, the toolkit will eventually be turned into an on-line training curriculum. The situation analysis is very critical part of the Toolkit that answers a number of questions based on case studies. The questions were based on the work already done in the field, information on advisory services done in the past, reference materials and brain storming. It is not an exhaustive list. Again there could be more questions.

It was acknowledged that no two country situation is similar and there are a lot of things that one does not know what makes a post-conflict country succeed. Although DPADM contributed to the civil service reform of Rwanda, the success of Rwanda cannot be attributed to the advice given by DPADM.

DPADM can only go to a country when it feels that the country is ready to set up a government. Even when DPADM sends an advisory mission to a post-conflict country, it normally provides advice on strategy and policy formulation but not on the output of the public service, such as education, road, health, etc.

While in principle the idea of such a toolkit is found useful, the tile seems prescriptive and needs to be reviewed. Secondly, since governance is an issue in post- conflict countries not in post-disaster ones, the toolkit will be appropriate to post-conflict countries not to post-disaster countries.

There is a problem of data fragmentation when one is trying to find information in the area of post-conflict countries. The idea of bringing together such a kit in a user friendly manner is commendable because many countries would benefit from this kind of tool. To make it more interactive, the toolkit might need to be either:

- (a) Published on the web; or
- (b) Designed in a form of Wikipedia so that many people could contribute to it.

In order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience from one country to another, it would be necessary to ensure that behind every case there is an individual who was personally involved in the preparation of the case study and who can answer questions or become a counterpart.

Finally, the fact that the document is going to be a non-academic type was found to be a good thing. The outline could also benefit from an on-line survey that could provide out-of-the-box approaches.