

## **20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration**

**12 - 23 April 2021**

**By George Scott- Secretary General, African Association for Public Administration and Management**

**Honorable Panelists,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I bring you warm greetings from the African Association for Public Administration and Management Executive Committee, Council and Secretariat. It is a pleasure to represent the Association at the 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

Allow me to thank our gracious hosts for organizing this annual meeting focusing on “Building inclusive, effective and resilient institutions for sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and implementation of the SDGs”. Our Association resonates with the theme as well as the eight overarching policy areas. Today, I will speak on the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development, paying special emphasis to sound policymaking as basis for the achievement of SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you will agree with me that the COVID-19 experience shows that countries that had implemented sound policies were able to better address the COVID-19 crisis. For example, countries that had achieved access to clean water; reduced number of people living in slums; and decreased pre-existing health conditions such as non-communicable diseases had more success in mitigating the COVID-19 risks as compared to those which had barely made any progress. This is a time that all countries must urgently implement the SDG’s fully to be able to mitigate future risks and calamities. The pandemic has exposed the consequences of deepening systemic inequality and prioritizing growth beyond universal boundaries. But amid a devastating crisis there is space for bold decisions. Since the pandemic, the world has seen policy making paradigm shifts in response to the emerging issues related to the pandemic management.

The theory and practice of public policy among others, involve three key elements; empirical evidence/research, citizen participation and finally strong institutions which can implement the policies. Research has been a key enabler for innovation and problem solving mostly in the developed world. The African continent has grappled with prioritizing research as the basis for good governance, this however has changed with many governments consulting the academia and relying on research as the basis for policy development and implementation. Similarly, the African continent has showed commitment to research by funding institutions of higher learning and centers of excellence such as those in Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Mozambique, Malawi and Ethiopia. The African Peer Review Mechanism also form an integral part of comparative research and self-evaluation for African states. This positive shift signifies good-will to further strengthen research to support sound policymaking.

As the recipients of public policy, citizen's involvement and participation is integral to policy making and implementation. African citizens are increasingly becoming more aware of their rights and responsibilities not only as citizens but global citizens. Today, it is very likely that an incident in one part of the world will cause ripple effects not only in the foreign policy but also on local policy. Earlier this month, Kenyans took to social media to petition the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reconsider advancing loans to the Kenyan government, citing unsustainability of public debt and consequent tax increments. This incident shows growth of engaged citizens who are invested in the future of their country. These youthful engaged citizens in the continent, must be harnessed and channeled towards building sustainable societies where no one is left behind.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; Sound policymaking ultimately means good governance evidenced in economic growth, employment, more investment opportunities, public trust and overall efficient and effective service delivery for the citizens. Strong institutions are the conduit between governments and citizens in service delivery. Strengthening institutions may seem like an uphill task however with accountability and transparency, embedded in service charter; effective management, from competitive recruitment processes and capacity building of human resources in institutions are a tangible place to start.

With an integrated approach to sound policymaking, governments stand to; strengthen its capacity through more coherent policies and functioning systems; enhance service delivery through efficient services and achieve greater legitimacy from both functional systems of governance and enhanced service delivery. This approach will surely achieve the ambition of leaving no one behind.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen; As a professional organization, African Association for Public Administration and Management lends itself to the promotion of excellence and professionalism in service delivery. We are government partners in; strengthening evidence and research based policy making through, an array of programmes including, seminars, workshops and annual roundtable conferences as well as publications which include journals, reports and books. We have embraced the uncertain pandemic period to reinvent as well as build our capacity to become a resilient organization. The diversification of programmes has seen the organization focus on a number of themes rooted in the African Association for Public Administration and Management Strategic plan as well as the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. The Association has entered into partnership agreements with like-minded organizations in America, Asia, Canada, India among others. Synergies with other professional organizations enable us to share experiences as well as costs of conducting programmes by leveraging our collective strengths. This year, we continue to engage all our members and stakeholders on the best delivery of training programmes.

With these few remarks, esteemed guests, ladies and gentlemen, African Association for Public Administration and Management appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this committee of experts and great audience.

Thank you!