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years of innovations in governance and public administration

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SEMINAR ON QUALITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE

*How can we make public service in Africa
qualitative, efficient and effective in the light of the
objectives of economic and social emergence?*

CONCEPT PAPER

**30th October - 1st November 2017
Tangier (Kingdom of Morocco)**

I. Context and Justification

In recent years, Africa has embarked on major reform processes to achieve the objectives of economic and social emergence. Among these reforms, is the reform of institutions, and in particular public administrations and with them, those of the public service with a view to making it what is known as a qualitative public service. This concept is not always easy considering the various diversifications it unfortunately ends up taking in the common sense. Therefore, what is this qualitative public service in the light of the objectives of economic and social emergence? What are the elements that can lead to it? What are the men and the profiles necessary for public sector institutions that enable us to attain this goal? These are some of the questions that this seminar will attempt to answer.

These initiatives aiming at building public administrations, based on the professionalism of public service agents and the promotion of a culture of integrity, transparency, performance, accountability, and results and at the same time based on an authentic and universal reference system, continue in a sustainable manner.

It is in this context that the African Charter on "the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration" was adopted then ratified by several countries and with or before it the annual celebration of the African Public Service Day which takes place on June 23. These strong actions of particular interest have revealed and continue to reveal the central place of public administration and the services which are attached to it in each State. In the same vein, they highlight the attention as well as the means implemented with a view to its modernization.

Indeed, in most countries of the African continent, the question of public service remains a crucial issue. It is in fact through them that one can get an idea of how the State works, its progress and its limits as well. It is also they who express the responsible or less responsible nature of the form of governance implemented within the State, or within local communities. Thus for example, the continuation of the modernization of public administration through the implementation of efficient management systems within State structures remains a major concern.

The ambition of this approach is notably to give the agents of public administrations the tools and practices that will not only make their action more effective, respectful of the values and principles of the public service but also able them to guarantee these institutions a certain ethics based in particular on responsibility, understood in the prudential sense as: the combination of respect for legal and regulatory frameworks, of the adaptation to the singularity of contexts, simplicity, readability and consistency of procedures, accountability, and of compatibility with the standards accepted as legitimate at the international level both in terms of permanent intension towards the satisfaction of the citizenry than that of the user.

The quality of the public service therefore means to be a permanent intension towards the well-being of the administration or public service. It is a requirement of the citizen as a responsibility of the authority and the agent of the administration. This supposes at once the

assumption of a certain idea of the public good, as the foundation and destination of the realization of good, of well-being and of the better living together.

It corresponds to providing both the agents and recipients of the service with a set of services that meet their expectations from the point of view of compliance with the procedures relating thereto as well as of the achievement of their legitimate expectations.

The quality of public service can therefore no longer be reduced to a strictly technical or technological aspect. It is primarily related to the definition and understanding of an environment.

It is a conditioning built around a certain number of pillars. These pillars being the legal and institutional backbone that will generate technical bodies and practices that meet the needs expressed by the recipients or beneficiaries of the services in accordance with the requirements of time or deadlines and a certain deontology. This one should correspond both to the cultures and traditions of the environment but also to the ability to meet expectations and hopes of other contexts and cultures. Hence the conjunction between the requirements of authenticity and universality expressed through what has been called Responsible Public Governance.

The quality of the public service thus embraces transversal elements from which derives the idea of reliability and credibility of the public service's action as an institution or body but also as an action or set of activities aimed at satisfying the community needs.

It is in this quest for performance that efforts to improve the quality of public service are now central in the modernization policies of public administrations of the countries of the world, particularly the African continent. The quality experiences in force are multiplying in public entities, they take various forms, including programs of performance improvement, quality circles, service commitments, quality charters, certifications, performance improvement programs, frameworks for self-assessment of Public Functions, etc. All these attempts inspired by private management aimed at achieving an effective quality approach are already marking a significant change in public administration, resolutely geared towards targeted objectives and the performance of the actions it undertakes.

Although, often criticized by its importation from the private sector and on the incompatibilities observed in particular between the evaluation of public policies and the evaluation of performances, besides, the operationalization of the quality cannot therefore be incompatible with the idea of public service. It is, moreover, compatible with it. The essence of this quality approach is the priority given to the communication and satisfaction of public service stakeholders, i.e. the satisfaction of the beneficiary user and the State service provider.

This change in public administration has been influenced by a set of factors calling to question the traditional procedures, which are a source of burden in public administration and loss of public wealth. Change in this context is important, as it affects the mentality of the stakeholders as well as the traditional functioning within these administrations.

Leaving this biased determinism, we deduce from it the following results:

- Public administration enters in a logic of performance steering where the deliberations around programmes focus on the means, but also on the efficiency of the expenditure, with regard to the carefully defined objectives. It is the gradual transition from a logic of means to a logic of results in the public service. It is no longer a question of giving more importance to the volume of means devoted to a policy, than to the concrete results obtained by these means, but it is advisable to juxtapose them for an evaluation;
- The public administration undertakes especially to readjust the mental software of its agents so that they carry the obvious, reliable and measurable progress values in order to satisfy its users and consider an international recognition through certification, accreditation or labeling.

Because, being aware of the issues and challenges facing these countries today, it is necessary to see and define the elements of implementation of the quality in order to allow public administration to truly be part of a perspective of performance and efficiency of its action, able to accompany the ongoing changes and especially the development programs. It has, therefore, become important to identify the existing means and tools in order to make public service in Africa a qualitative, effective and efficient service in the light of the objectives of economic and social emergence.

II. Objectives

The general objective of this meeting is to define an integrated strategy for the implementation of qualitative, efficient and effective services within public administrations in Africa.

Specific objectives notably include:

1. The definition of integrated quality in public administrations;
2. The identification of priority sectors for the establishment of a qualitative, efficient and effective service;
3. Capacity building of public administrations staff in the new performance-oriented public management model;
4. The establishment of tools and mechanisms for inter-ministerial cooperation for a better operationalization of development programs.
5. The establishment of strategies, legal, institutional and infrastructural frameworks that are likely to promote synergy between politicians and civil servants in the context of quality public service delivery.

III. Topics for discussion

1. The notion of quality in public administration and services delivery in Africa;
2. The conditions and tools necessary for the effective implementation of qualitative public services delivery in Africa;

3. The role of quality human resources in the delivery of a quality public service;
4. The political environment and training policies for achieving quality Public Service delivery;
5. The priority axes and the structural, legal and cultural transformations with a view to setting up qualitative, efficient and effective service in the light of the objectives of economic and social emergence;
6. The reliable actors and indicators of the establishment of qualitative, efficient and effective service;
7. The shared fundamental principles and challenges of accountability, monitoring and evaluation, in the implementation of quality service in public administration;
8. The limits and challenges of a rigorous implementation of the establishment of a qualitative public service;
9. The adjustments necessary for a better exercise of evaluation and accountability, in order to better satisfy the stakeholders of public administration and to capitalize public expenditure.

IV. Target audiences

- Ministers in charge of Public Service, Labor, Human Resources, Administrative Reform and Modernization of the State;
- Ministers in charge of Reform, good Governance, Planning and Public Policy Development;
- Chairpersons of National Commissions in charge of Public Administration, Governance and State Reform;
- Heads of Services and Secretaries to the Cabinets/Governments (howsoever called), Special Advisers in the offices of the Prime Minister and the Presidency of the Republic, in charge of Planning, Innovation and Governance;
- Members of the Court of Auditors, Supreme Audit Institutions and parliamentary committees;
- International organizations and institutions interested in the issues of the Forum.

V. Resource persons

The above themes will be developed by resource persons with proven expertise in both practice and theory in public administration. The proceedings will be conducted under the guidance of these resource persons who will reproduce the problem of quality in the public service, as part of a theoretical and contextual questioning. They will facilitate the debates and guide discussions in the direction of building an African strategy intended to set up equipped public services to be transcribed in the achievement of the vision of emergence of the States.

VI. Expected results

It is expected that participants, amongst other things, will be able to engage one another in exchange of ideas in best practices on the theme of the seminar. Consequently, they will acquire:

- a. A better understanding of the general vision and prospects of public administration in the service of the citizen;

- b. A sufficient understanding of the quality issues and a definition of the priority elements as well as the mechanisms to be put in place for its success;
- c. A better identification of actors and indicators of the operationalization of quality in public services in Africa;
- d. A sufficient understanding of the institutional and operational environment of the African continent for a better implementation of quality in its public administrations;
- e. A legibility of public policies according to a quality approach.

VII. Methodologies

The proceedings of the seminar will take place in plenary sessions. The resource persons will introduce the presentations and lead the debates. These will result in proposals for a report, which will be presented with recommendations and an action plan.

VIII. Registration fees

Each participant will pay a nominal amount of US \$300 (Three hundred dollars). This amount will be paid on the first day of the seminar during registration.

Date: 30th October – 1st November 2017

Venue: Tangier (Morocco)

Duration: Three days

Working languages: French and English (simultaneous translation available)

For further information about the seminar or CAFRAD, do not hesitate to contact us at the following address:

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