

## THE RABAT DECLARATION

**WE THE AFRICAN MINISTERS OF CIVIL SERVICE**, meeting at the invitation of the Kingdom of Morocco for the Second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service, held in Rabat, Morocco from 13 - 15 December 1998. jointly organised by the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD) and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), agree on the following

**HAVING DISCUSSED *the Public Service in Africa: New Challenges, Professionalism and Ethics*** through a range of issues on the effective, efficient and ethical workings of a professional civil service and human resources development within the African context;

**AWARE OF THE PROMISING PERSPECTIVES** brought about by the previous conference held in Tangier, and which have created a better awareness on the part of the international community to the specific administrative constraints in the development of African countries;

**HAVING TAKEN NOTE WITH SATISFACTION** of the commitments and the efforts made as well as the initiatives taken by the different countries to implement the Tangier Declaration and Resolution 50/225 of the United Nations General Assembly and having also taken note of the recommendations of the 36th Governing Board of CAFRAD held on July 1997;

**RECOGNIZING** that given the political and economic changes of recent years, new responsibilities have been placed on the public administration of African countries, including:

- ◆ adapting to the growing globalisation of the economy and establishing an environment favouring the growth of the private sector;
- ◆ ensuring not only the economic growth and the strengthening of basic infrastructures but also social development and the narrowing of increasing disparities of income and opportunities in favour of social solidarity;
- ◆ modernising the administrative structures through grasping new information and communication technologies while making the civil service close to the citizen and providing quality services.

**CONSIDERING** that to meet the multiple challenges in creating conditions for sustainable economic and social development on the eve of the 21st century, governments must be backed by a responsible, effective, efficient and responsive public administration;

**ATTACHING** special importance to the need of investing in human resources, in developing them and efficiently using them as a basis for the consolidation of democracy, for the achievement of social progress and the reform of public administration;

**BELIEVING** that:

- ◆ effects of structural adjustment programmes have sometimes weakened the capacity of the public sector to perform its missions effectively;
- ◆ promoting conditions which enable the civil service to attract, to motivate and to retain highly qualified individuals of great integrity and merit will create an administration that is service-oriented, complementing and drawing synergy from both the private sector and civil society,
- ◆ a well-performing and transparent public service is an essential prerequisite for private sector growth and Africa's economic recovery;

**CONSIDERING** that:

- ◆ the promotion of professionalism, the enhancement of ethical standards and integrity systems including the fight against corruption in the public administration of African countries is a key issue for the development of the region;
- ◆ the experience gained in this field in some countries deserves to be widely known and shared;
- ◆ a comprehensive African approach to cope with the new challenges and to enhance the role, professionalism, ethics and image of the public service should be defined as part of a concerted effort to revitalise public administration for economic and social development;

**REITERATE OUR COMMITMENT FOR HOLDING MEETINGS OF**

**THE BIENNIAL PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF CIVIL SERVICE ON A REGULAR BASIS** since it provides a forum for dialogue and a step in the direction of attaining our common objectives;

**WE NOW DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY** to the current difficulties faced by and the needs of African States, with a view to increasing assistance for the development and modernisation of their public administration;

**BASED ON THE ABOVE, WE RECOMMEND** the following actions:

- Each country makes the commitment and takes the necessary measures to regenerate professionalism and promote ethics in its public administration by:
  - ◆ creating managerial structures and mechanisms;
  - ◆ reforming civil service codes to introduce principles of neutrality, transparency, flexibility and stressing ethics and integrity;
  - ◆ implementing a system of recruitment, career development and remuneration based on merit;
  - ◆ improving and modernising methodologies and programmes for training civil servants.
- The Chairperson of the Conference sets up jointly with the Conference Participants, a working group with the backing of CAFRAD and in close collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to perform the following tasks :
  - ◆ to elaborate a *Charter for the Public Service in Africa* to affirm the values of the public service profession, restate its goals and missions in the light of the changing conditions and needs of the countries in the region, and outline the basic conditions for enhancing its role, professionalism, ethics and image, including the elaboration of Code of conduct for African public servants.
  - ◆ to develop strategies and methodologies which can assist the Governments of the African region to achieve such objectives and to meet these basic conditions.
- CAFRAD undertakes the following actions :

9<sup>th</sup> International Anti-Corruption Conference, 10-15 October 1999, Durban, South Africa

- ◆ To carry out periodic studies on public policies and programmes and to strengthen the capacity of public organisations;
  - ◆ To organise a Conference of African Directors of public service in order to exchange ideas and views on Professionalism and Ethics in African Public Service;
  - ◆ To prepare a comprehensive report for the next Conference to be presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Resolution 50/225 of the United Nations General Assembly in 2001;
  - ◆ To organise regular sub-regional meetings to examine the issues of human resources management, including recruitment, in the public service;
  - ◆ To support in the update and strengthening of the training programmes of Schools and Institutes of Public administration in the context of African Public Administration needs regarding in particular ethics and professionalism, and to make proposals for appropriate reforms;
  - ◆ to promote and sustain, in collaboration with other regional and international organisations, and with the help of websites, press releases, and other means a virtual community and network of public administration practitioners and scholars for the debate and exploration of relevant issues; and
- Within the framework on ongoing United Nations initiatives for financing development, special attention should be given to mobilising the necessary financial resources to strengthen African public administration. In this respect, the Conference follows with interest the steps being taken for the holding of the International Conference planned on this theme.
  - UN DESA undertakes consultation and build support for the proclamation of a *United Nations Day for Public Service and Development*, to be observed annually;

**WE CALL ON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER DONOR PARTNERS** to allocate in their development assistance policy, additional resources in order to facilitate the reforms of the public administration to meet these new challenges.

**WE REQUEST:**

- ◆ the Secretary General of the UN to provide the necessary expertise and resources to Governments, upon their request, in order to improve professionalism, to strengthen integrity and to combat corruption,
- ◆ the Secretary General of the UN to facilitate the exchange of experiences between regions on issues linked to the themes of this Conference, in particular within the framework of the Meeting of the Group of Experts on the Programme of the United Nations in Public Administration and Finance,
- ◆ the Secretary General of the UN to ensure that professionalism and ethics be considered as priority themes in the activities related to public administration within the United Nations System;
- ◆ the Chairperson of this Conference to undertake the task of raising the awareness of the international community to the importance of the themes discussed in this Conference, and to report at the next Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Civil Service on steps taken for the implementation of this Declaration.

Rabat, 15 December 1998