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**Transforming Public Service for Effective  
Integrated Implementation of the 2030 Agenda  
for Sustainable Development  
A Policy Paper by John-Mary Kauzya**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In this paper, the author provides a synopsis of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted by world leaders in September 2015. He argues that in order for this agenda to be implemented and the goals to be achieved, countries will need to transform their public services and develop their capacity to deliver critical essential services equitable and effectively. The paper further argues that transforming the Public Service will need a transformational leadership even if transactional and even bureaucratic leadership are necessary as well. The paper also gives some aspects of what a transformed public service would look like in light of the 2030 Agenda, arguing that the characteristics of the transformed public service should be viewed in light of putting people at the centre of the Public Service operations and leaving no one behind in the provision and consumption of services.*

## BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup> agreed by world leaders in New York in September 2000, during the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations<sup>2</sup>, came and passed at the end of December 2015. The work ahead for every country developing or developed, including the international community, is to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>3</sup> agreed and adopted by world leaders meeting in the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in September 2015. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, containing 17 SDGs and 169 targets, is a global one applicable to all countries irrespective of their development status. It has replaced, and is building on, the achievements of the MDGs to guide development efforts by all countries of the world for the next 15 years, beginning in January 2016. Governments, key actors and stakeholders are looking at ways to achieve a more effective balance and integration among the policies and strategies guiding the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development, as well as the practical tools and means of implementation needed to achieve sustainable development. The key question this paper seeks to address in this respect is: what changes or, to be dramatic, what transformation in the Public Service will it take to make the Public Service effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the SDGs?

There are prerequisites for achieving the SDGs. One of them is sound good governance subtended by, among other things, a capable public

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<sup>1</sup> The Millennium Development Goals are to (i) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (ii) achieve universal primary education; (iii) promote gender equality and empower women; (iv) reduce child mortality; (v) improve maternal health; (vi) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (vii) ensure environmental sustainability; and (viii) develop a global partnership for development.

<sup>2</sup> See United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/55/2 of 18 September 2000.

<sup>3</sup> See United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, adopted by the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda on 25 September 2015.

administration with a competent public service. The implementation of the MDGs illustrates that an inadequate public administration with an incompetent public service in terms of institutional and human resources, including transactional and transformational leadership capacities, leads to insufficiency or even absence of policies and strategies at the national level, as well as to weak implementation, causing poor delivery of public services that would be vital to the achievement of global commitments such as the SDGs. Building a capable public administration with a competent public service becomes a critical objective in situations where public institutions are not able to improve and accelerate the operational capacity for public service delivery and the development of a country in general.

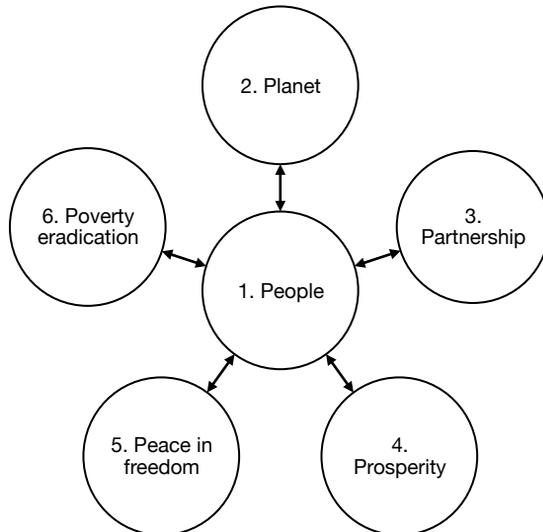
The question of what it will take to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the SDGs is, in this paper, discussed from the standpoint of the need to transform and develop public administration and public service capacities to achieve sustainable development. Given socio-politico-economic development challenges related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, doing government as usual, doing public administration as usual and delivering public services as usual will not produce the desired results. There must be comprehensive changes or transformation in the Public Service to support the implementation of this agenda. First we summarize the major point of this agenda.

## THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SDGS

Let us recall here the proposed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs. The preamble of the 2030 Agenda points out five basic focus areas, which we have expanded to six: people, planet, prosperity, peace, partnership and poverty eradication. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was created for the prosperity of the people and planet and calls upon partnerships and collaboration from all countries, actors and stakeholders to engage in its implementation. Without peace,

prosperity is not achievable. Without poverty eradication, sustainable development is impossible. In Figure 1, we refer to these as the 'six P's' of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the central one being the 'P' for 'people', because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is made by 'we the people', for the people, and will have to be implemented with full engagement of the people. As the political joke in the United States goes, 'It is the people, Stupid!' (a phrase used during President Bill Clinton's campaign in 1992 against George Bush, to emphasize the importance of revamping the economy of the United States).

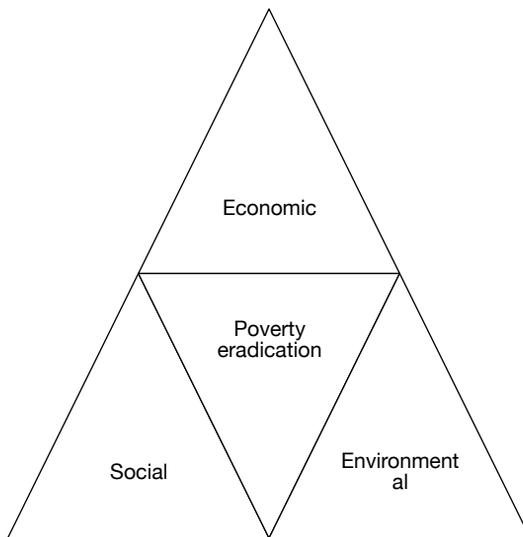
**Figure 1 – The 'six P's' of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**



The 17 goals are around three pillars (social, economic and environmental). However, given the recognition that poverty eradication is the biggest challenge facing the world, in this presentation we take poverty eradication as a fourth pillar, as indicated in Figure 2.

The Sustainable Development Goals and targets are integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated into national planning processes, policies and strategies. It is important to recognize the link between sustainable development and other relevant ongoing processes in the economic, social and environmental fields.

**Figure 2 – The dimensions of sustainable development**



Sustainable development is understood to refer to three dimensions, that is, economic, social and environment development. In addition, it is agreed that poverty eradication remains the biggest development challenge facing the whole world and that without eradicating poverty in all its forms, sustainable development cannot be achieved. In many countries, the issues

related to poverty have been on the agenda for some time. Therefore, eradicating poverty is indeed a historical formidable challenge. But there are several other challenges along the path of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Here, we point out the key ones.

## KEY CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Many countries are going to be confronted with various challenges of different natures and varying magnitudes, which they will need to address in order to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve the SDGs: these challenges will vary according to the socio-politico-economic conditions of each country, including levels of development. It is therefore difficult, and may not even be desirable, to try to enumerate all possible challenges countries will face, as if all countries were the same. In Figure 3, we point out the basic ones which will be the core and therefore likely to be faced by all countries irrespective of the conditions of the country. They are as follows: (i) how to eradicate poverty in all its forms, (ii) how to achieve social sustainability, (iii) how to achieve environmental sustainability and (iv) how to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and mainstream them into coherent development policies and strategies. These basic challenges point to a critical question: what are the development policy and strategy implications at national and local levels generated by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda? The policy and strategy implications are related to the four basic challenges and will require a fairly transformed public administration and public service, to be addressed. Therefore, this paper focuses on the challenge of transforming the Public Service for sustainable development.

**Figure 3 – Key Challenges**

## THE CHALLENGE OF HOW TO ERADICATE POVERTY

Poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The number of people in the world now living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. Despite this reduction in global poverty, this number represents too many people suffering poverty in a world of abundance. Moreover, in some parts of the world the situation is still serious. More than 40 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, still lived in extreme poverty in 2015 (MDG Report, 2015). This emphasizes that the challenge of eradicating poverty is still huge! It concerns inequality and inequity as well as suffering all the indignity of being regarded as poor and hopeless. And so, the very first challenge confronting sustainable development is how to eradicate poverty. As a challenge confronting government, it can prove persistent and teasing, especially where economic growth is accompanied by growth in inequalities. Where this happens, people who become less poor remain disgruntled because they turn their attention to the very rich.

Thus the problem turns into the issue of the gap between the rich and the poor rather than poverty as such.

## THE CHALLENGE OF HOW TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Social sustainability can be a very ambiguous and huge undertaking because it covers almost all aspects of human life. Even poverty itself is a big social issue. To deal with ensuring social sustainability, one has to address issues related to equity and equality; social cohesion; social inclusion; shelter; education; health; youth engagement and employment; engaging the elderly; gender and advancement of women in social, economic and political life; migration; population and demographic growth; and dynamics, social diversity and so on. Each of these is a huge topic in itself and would require big policy and strategic actions to address it.

## THE CHALLENGE OF HOW TO ACHIEVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustaining the environment such that current generations do not create environmental conditions that will be untenable for the future generations is a complex thing and touches very much on issues of poverty eradication as well as on those related to social sustainability.

*Achieving and sustaining environmental sustainability is a challenge, especially with the emerging threat of climate change. And Africa is doing well in limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and ozone-depleting substances, yet forest cover is shrinking, and most countries struggle to meet targets on water and sanitation. To improve access to water and sanitation, countries must concentrate efforts in rural areas and low-income groups, as urban-rural income disparities in access are holding back progress. (Africa Development Bank Working Group)*

## THE CHALLENGE OF HOW TO INTEGRATE AND STREAMLINE THE THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Then there is the teasing challenge related to how to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and mainstream them into national and local development policies and strategies. The UN General Assembly resolution clearly states that

*[t]he challenges and commitments contained in these major conferences and summits are interrelated and call for integrated solutions. To address them effectively, a new approach is needed. Sustainable development recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, combatting inequality within and among countries, preserving the planet, creating sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and fostering social inclusion are linked to each other and are interdependent (United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1: 5)*

It is understood that each pillar being treated alone is likely to be unsuccessful. But even if, to some measure, it succeeded, it would not be sustainable because any shortfalls in one pillar easily causes faults in the others. For example, the struggle against poverty by agricultural rural people can easily degrade the environment (e.g. by depleting forests and vegetation cover, causing severe soil erosion and eventually flooding and landslides in some cases). Addressing issues of the environment without addressing issues of poverty would not yield sustainable positive results.

## THE ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

The State is a critical player in the socio-politico-economic development of any country. Therefore, it is worthwhile to interrogate the role of the institutions of the State in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the SDGs. This time around (unlike with the MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals contain goal 16, which includes effective, inclusive and accountable institutions. However, the State is not

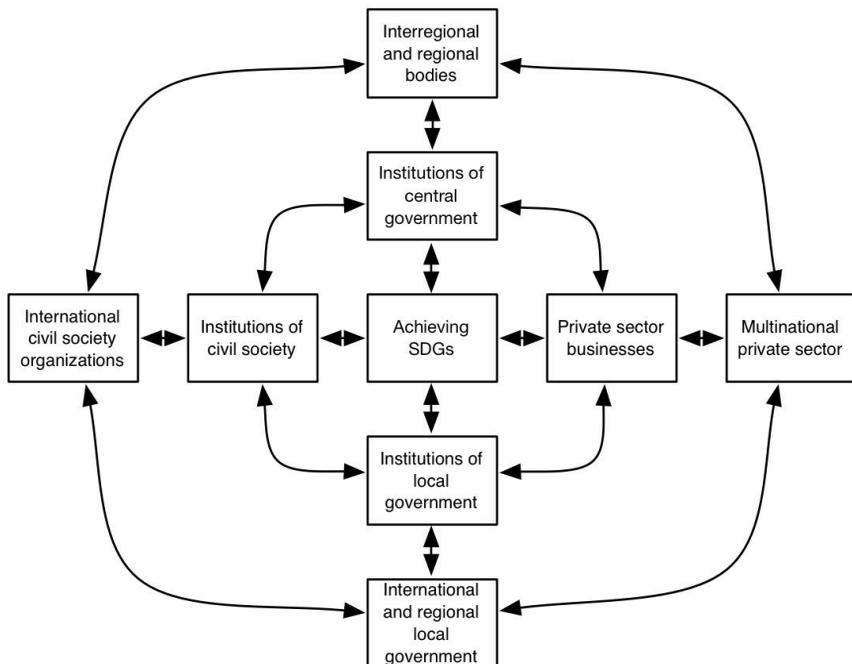
the only player in this. In other words, the interrogation should be formulated with four tags: what should the state do to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve SDGs? What should civil society do? What should the private sector do? And how can they collaborate and create synergy to ensure integration and harmony in sustainable development? These interrogations must be directed at the global, regional, national, local and community levels. At the community level, there may be need, in certain situations and countries, to look at the role of traditional institutions that often have a bearing on the performance and behaviour of societies. Understanding the role of institutions in sustainable development must be discussed and understood by looking at institutions at five levels:

1. The global level (e.g. the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, etc)
2. The regional level (e.g. the European Union, the African Union and other regional integration bodies)
3. The national level in terms of central government and public sector institutions
4. The local level in terms of local governments where governance systems are decentralized
5. The community level in terms of community-based organizations

Any of these levels acting on its own alone will not achieve sustainable development. One of the challenges related to developing institutions concerns how to ensure that all of these levels are integrated and working in synergy. Figure 4 summarizes the framework for interrogating the role of institutions in sustainable development in an integrated way, taking into account all the sectors at all levels and globally.

**Figure 4 – Framework for interrogating the role of institutions in sustainable development.**

Source: Adapted from J. M. Kauzya (2003).



Achieving SDGs is at the centre, because we believe that whether it concerns poverty eradication, addressing social problems, economic problems or even saving the environment, ultimately the real results should be seen at community level in terms of achieving SDGs. A call for achieving sustainable development should include examining the institutional arrangements and capacities at each of these levels and in each of these sectors, to assess the extent to which the institutions are appropriate to support the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of

achievement of sustainable development in an inclusive and integrated manner, leaving no one behind.

## GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INSTITUTIONS CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING THE SDGS

First, there needs to be an effective State for sustainability of any socio-politico-economic activity, let alone achievement of SDGs, to happen. Countries that have seen their States crumble have witnessed severe suffering and can never hope to achieve SDGs without rebuilding their State and public administration/public service institutions. The most obvious way of grasping the importance and role of Government systems and institutions of the State in achieving SDGs is to look at what happens to a country/society when its state institutions get destroyed. It is good that the framers of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from the Rio+20 Summit that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, recognized right away that good governance is critical for sustainable development. A capable state and an effective public administration/public service are indispensable for sustainable development. A capable, intelligent and effective State will work with actors in the private and civil society sectors to redefine and agree its mission and mandate as well as the challenges with which these actors are intended to concern themselves. The aspirations of the entire country in terms of socio-politico-economic development and the challenges that stand in the way to the attainment of these aspirations are analysed, diagnosed, discussed and agreed through consultations and participation of a cross section of the population. At the same time, the sharing of responsibilities and means of collaboration and participatory action among all sectors (public, private and civil society sectors) are determined. In this way, the missions of the State will be defined or redefined, understood and agreed by all the other actors. When the definition of missions is done in a participatory way, involving all sectors, chances become greater for each governance actor to know what the

others are doing and how collaboration should be approached. This also provides a reference point for the State to focus on what it can and must do.

It is equally noteworthy that the capability, intelligence and effectiveness of the State need to be seen at the various levels and in the various institutions of the State. The Legislature must be capable, intelligent and effective in its representative, legislative and oversight functions insofar as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs are concerned. The Executive must be capable, intelligent and effective in its integrated policy and strategy formulation and implementation, service delivery and performance control functions. And the Judiciary must be capable, intelligent and effective in the administration of fair accessible and equitable justice to all. Likewise, all other institutions established by the State, whether for public investment (such as public enterprises) or for accountability (such as ombudsman) must be capable, intelligent and effective in the functions for which they are established. In brief, as goal 16 of the SDGs clearly spells out, there must be effective, inclusive and accountable public institutions to drive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. One critical public institution in this regard is the Public Service. The following sections of the paper focus on the role of the Public Service as a central component of public administration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of the SDGs.

## THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA AND ACHIEVING SDGS

Transforming the Public Service for effective, inclusive and accountable implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of SDGs implies, first and foremost, reviewing the Public Service role in the implementation of the Agenda. Then the nature and quality of the Public Service that is required to effectively play this role can

be determined so that the transformation is driven by clear objectives. There are many things the Public Service in every country will do to implement or to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achievement of the SDGs. We have singled out six generic ones which we consider as the most critical. These are (i) policy and strategy planning, (ii) providing services, (iii) developing infrastructure, (iv) resource mobilization and utilization, (v) monitoring and evaluation and (vi) institutional and human resource capacity development. Some of these may be outsourced, whereas others could result in severe regrets on the part of the Public Service if outsourced to private operators. Others could be partially outsourced in a collaborative arrangement between the Public Service and private operators. In this, collaboration becomes an important feature of the Public Service of the future. For example, service provision and infrastructure development can be outsourced and produce effective results if the outsourcing is well supervised.

However, it would be a bad idea for a government to outsource policy and strategy planning. Capacity development and monitoring and evaluation can be partially outsourced. There are several combinations of collaboration between private and public sector operators through which such outsourcing arrangements can be undertaken. The issue to take into consideration is that government may outsource anything else, but not its responsibility. This means that outsourcing itself requires some critical competences and talent on the part of government or public service if it has to produce the desired results. Such competences include, but are not limited to, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, professionalism, integrity, ethical conduct, communication and so on. As had already been noted well before the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was conceived,

*[p]ublic sector organisations are central to the delivery of sustainable development. Every aspect of their role – from education to environmental services, and from planning to social care – shapes how people live their lives. If public sector bodies do not take on this leadership challenge, citizens may find themselves cut off from sustainable lifestyles. (Birney et al., 2010)*

Table 1 illustrates the role of the Public Service in the achievement of the SDGs. The Public Service is expected to provide the bedrock on which all operations of all actors are anchored. When this is not provided, the whole effort of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is jeopardized. The Public Service is, as indicated, critical. The bedrock is the rule of law and justice, observance of human rights, law and order, security of person and property, leadership, professionalism, transparency, accountability, ethical conduct and integrity. All this goes to say that the Public Service is a critical instrument for State action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of SDGs. It is also a critical backbone for the action of all the other actors and stakeholders besides the government. The figure also illustrates that the Public Service is critical in integrating the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in national policies and strategies.

**Table 1 – The role of the Public Service in achieving SDGs<sup>4</sup>.**

	Policy and Strategy Planning	Providing Services	Infrastructure Development	Resource Mobilization and Utilization	Monitoring and Evaluation	Institutional and HR Capacity Development
Integration of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals						
						
						
						
						
						
						
						
						

<sup>4</sup> Red = Critical, Blue = Very Important, Green = Important, Purple = Fairly Important

	Red	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red
	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Red	Red
	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Red	Red
	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Red	Red
	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Red	Red
	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Red	Red
	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
	Red	Purple	Purple	Purple	Red	Red
<p>Conducive environment : Rule of Law, Justice, Respect for Human Rights, Law and Order, Inclusion, Security of Person and Property, Professionalism, Ethics, Integrity, Transparency, Accountability, Leadership</p>						

## LINKING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY TO ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The delivery of public services (including services such as education, health, peace, security and safety, law and order, justice, water, energy, information, diplomacy, environment protection, housing, refuse and garbage collection, sanitation, licensing, taxation and financial mobilization, poverty eradication, etc.) is generally taken as a key function of government, even in the most private sector-oriented countries. Behind the delivery of such services are institutions, policies, laws, rules, regulations, strategies and infrastructures, which are also put in place by governments. The effectiveness of any government lies in the extent to which services of this nature are delivered with equity, responsiveness, inclusion and accountability. Looking at the 17 SDGs, literally each of them will require effectiveness of service delivery to be achieved, as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2 – SDGs and services linked to them.**

<b>Goal 1</b>	End poverty in all its forms everywhere: the delivery of all services, health, education, infrastructure, information, law and order, justice, etc., contributes to fighting poverty in all its forms.
<b>Goal 2</b>	End hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture: public services linked to this include agricultural policy, land policy, agricultural extension work, research, food security policies, food safety services, etc.
<b>Goal 3</b>	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages: public services linked to this include health services in general, health policy, health insurance, primary healthcare, maternal health, immunization, medical research, hospitals, health clinics, pharmaceutical, maternity, all public health services, etc.
<b>Goal 4</b>	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all: public services linked to this include education policies; education infrastructure, including school buildings, etc.; kindergarten centres; primary schools; and other schools up to university, teacher training; etc.
<b>Goal 5</b>	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: public services linked to this include gender equality policies; education of girls; maternal healthcare; women-, land- and property-sensitive laws; etc.
<b>Goal 6</b>	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all: public services linked to this include provision of clean and portable water, refuse collection, sanitation services, etc.
<b>Goal 7</b>	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all: public service linked to this includes energy policy, electricity provision (e.g. lighting cities and villages, heating and cooling, energy research, especially for renewable energy, etc.)
<b>Goal 8</b>	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; full and productive employment; and decent work for all. Services linked to this include educational services to develop a skilled employable population, economic and employment policies (we bear in mind that in many African countries public service is the biggest employer), labour laws, etc.
<b>Goal 9</b>	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. Public services involved include industrialisation policy; developing infrastructures, including roads, railways, telephone links, Internet infrastructures and ICT policy; research promotion, etc.
<b>Goal 10</b>	Reduce inequality within and among countries. Public services linked to this include diplomacy, external trade promotion, etc.

<b>Goal 11</b>	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Public services linked to this include urban planning, urban services including urban transport, refuse collection, housing, etc.
<b>Goal 12</b>	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
<b>Goal 13</b>	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Services would include policy planning, regulation, research, etc., in all areas that concern climate change.
<b>Goal 14</b>	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
<b>Goal 15</b>	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems; sustainably manage forests; combat desertification; and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
<b>Goal 16</b>	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development; provide access to justice for all; and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
<b>Goal 17</b>	Strengthen the means of implementation, and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

## THE NEED FOR A TRANSFORMED PUBLIC SERVICE

It is clear that the work of the public service, especially the delivery of public services, is critical to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This makes it imperative that every government be equipped with adequate comprehensive capacities that ensure the delivery of public services. The reality, however, as the world grapples with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is that many governments, especially in developing and least developed countries, are still short of the requisite capacities for effective delivery of public services. Yet at the same time, in light of the criticality of effective delivery of public services to the achievement of SDGs, governments are expecting the Public Service to provide more and better quality of services. As if this was not difficult enough, more and better services are expected to be provided with fewer resources. Doing more with less is being taken to a

much higher level. Success will require a comprehensive positive transformation of the Public Service.

This makes transformation and development of the capacities for the delivery of public services a critical need that must figure prominently in the strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although public sector capacity development has been on the agenda of many governments and development partners, both national and international, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has heightened its importance. Moreover, it is necessary that the whole concept and practice of capacity development be recast to align it with the imperatives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This calls for a deep comprehensive transformation of public service. A number of questions need to be raised and answered.

The first question that rises is, what transformation must the public service undergo to be able to effectively play the critical role of implementing or facilitating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development? The second one is, how can the transformation be made? And the last one is, are there examples that can provide lessons learned and some inspiration for transforming the Public Service?

## THE TRANSFORMATION THAT THE PUBLIC SERVICE MUST UNDERGO

Change in the Public Service is not a new phenomenon. Public service reform programs have been a feature of many countries for some time. However, public service reform has tended to focus on bureaucratic efficiency and results. We recall the three 'E's' of management efficiency: effectiveness, efficiency and economy. In many respects the pursuit of bureaucratic perfection, where it succeeded, meant that government information management kept information more or less closed in; restructuring made different government units work in silos; and in general the government bureaucracy remained highly hierarchical. Public service reforms thus were inward looking. Another thing associated with public

service reforms is that in many countries, despite many resources spent on the reforms, public services did not make significant improvement, partly because challenges and objectives keep changing. The services, in some cases, did not even master bureaucratic effectiveness, let alone efficiency or economy! Therefore, public service leaders must realize that as they embark on the task of transforming the Public Service for achieving the SDGs, they are starting with a big deficit requiring that they first accomplish the job of reforming the services to make them effective and efficient.

In this light, the transformation the Public Service must undergo has to be constituted by a combination of accomplishing the reforms that have been ongoing to have effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery and a significant shift to integration, openness, citizen focus, creativity, innovation, information and communication technologies, public value, focus on outcomes, all facilitated by an empowering human resource management capacity that effectively embraces and harnesses diversity while identifying and applying highly effective incentives for creativity, innovation, transparency, accountability, ethics and professionalism (see Table 3). This will not happen unless public services are engineered and energized by a transformational leadership.

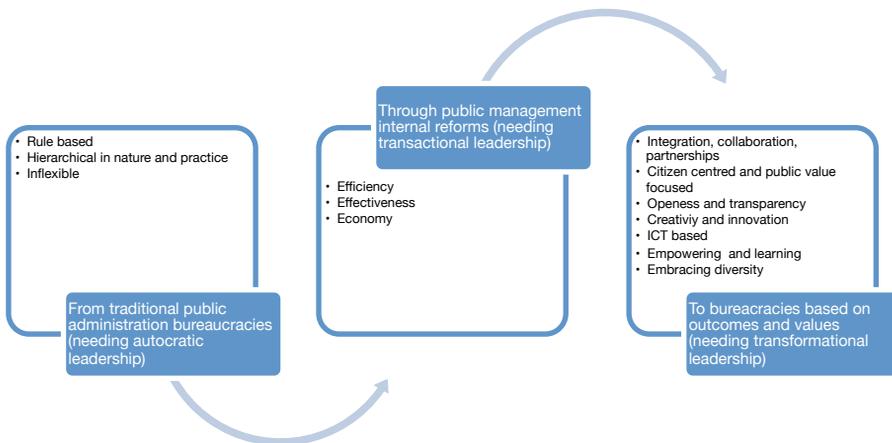
**Table 3 – The Transformation that the Public Service needs.**

Collaborative government, integrated planning and coordinated actions	<b>A transformed Public Service for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</b>
Transactional and transformational leadership across the whole public service	
Citizen-centred and people-involving service delivery	
Results-focused but more so on public value and outcome	
Ethical, professional and accountable	
Creative and innovative	
Adapting to and harnessing new technologies, especially ICTs	

Empowering to public servants through capable human resources managers	
Continuously learning	
Embracing diversity and global in outlook	

The Public Service in many countries is caught in a situation where it must seek a balance between the need for perfecting bureaucratic and transactional leadership and the critical necessity for shifting to transformational leadership, which is needed to transform the service into an effective machine for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The problem stems from the reality that most public services have not yet mastered bureaucratic leadership. This can be seen in the way that laws, rules, regulations, procedures and processes are often insufficiently followed or even in some cases abused, giving way to maladministration, including corruption which is endemic according to Transparency International (TI) (see Transparency International, 2015). There is need in the Public Service to adopt a multi-pronged public service leadership, with transactional and transformational leadership being in the mix. Transactional leadership is necessary to accomplish public service bureaucracy reforms for efficiency and effectiveness, and transformational leadership is needed for promoting creativity, innovation, citizen focus, collaboration, integration, future-oriented plans, partnerships and a sustained drive for outcomes and values. Although transforming our world by successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will need strong transformational leadership to give impetus to everything else that is required for success, this cannot be achieved within the context of ineffective, inefficient and opaque bureaucracies in public service. Transactional leadership is still very important.

**Figure 5 – The movement from traditional autocratic leadership to transformational leadership.**



*Value and values are closely linked. Seen through the lens of public value, the ethos and values of any public organisation, service provider or profession must be judged by how appropriate they are to the creation of value: better outcomes, services and trust. Inappropriate values may lead to the destruction of public value. (Birney et al., 2010)*

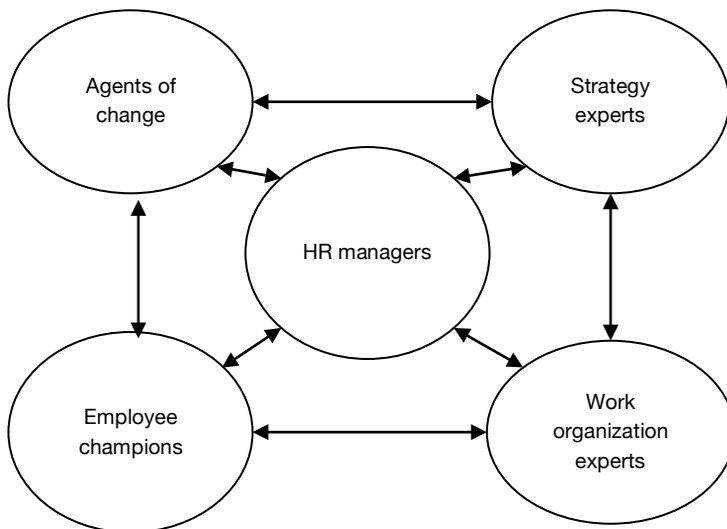
Although in Figure 5 it is presented as a shift, moving from bureaucratic leadership to transformational leadership, this is for analytical purposes. In reality, the three leadership tendencies are required. Bureaucratic leadership is needed for respect of laws, rules, regulations and due process, to avoid chaotic change and maladministration. Transactional leadership is needed to sustain efficiency in the utilization of resources to avoid waste and possible misuse of resources. And transformational leadership is emphasized here to call for change and focus on values, especially in the context where outcomes, inclusiveness, equity, transparency, accountability, justices, and so on, are needed.

## TRANSFORM THE TRANSFORMERS: EMPOWERING PUBLIC SERVANTS THROUGH CAPABLE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGERS

One of the biggest issues concerns the role of human resource managers in the Public Service in transforming the public service to make it an instrument of transformation. This clearly poses a challenge to human resource managers because it elevates what is expected of them beyond what some of them probably expect of themselves. The role of human resource managers in transforming institutional and human capacities of the Public Service can be summed up by the following four: strategy expert, work organization expert, employee champion and agent of continuous change and transformation.

**Figure 6 – Empowering and empowered public service human resource managers.**

Source: African public sector human resource managers network.



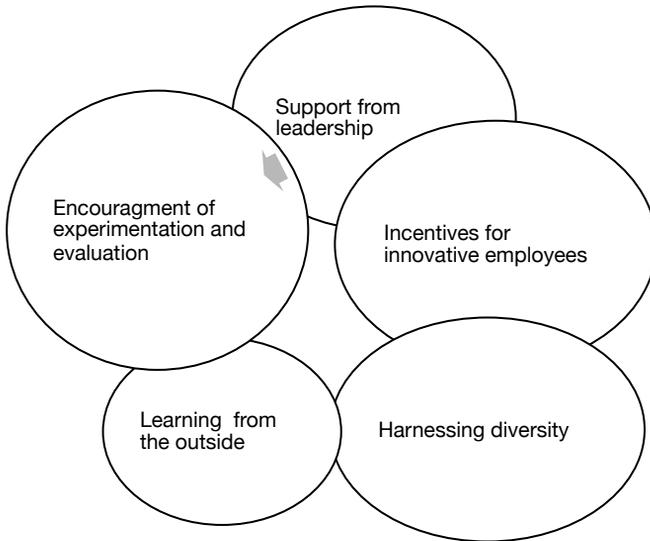
## HR MANAGERS AS STRATEGY EXPERTS AND AGENTS OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

We single out the roles of strategy expert and change agents because it is in these two roles that, if well played, can lead to transformation of institutional and human capacities in the Public Service. Those responsible for human resource management in the public service in any country needs to have at their fingertips the direction the country is planning to take in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the challenges it is facing and the capacity needs that it requires to overcome those challenges. Strategic planning is about being realistic in terms of analysis of challenges, problems, as well as in specifying existing and lacking institutional, human and other capacities. It is also about being optimistic in terms of future projections and outlooks. Countries need to look at and listen to themselves realistically in order to chart out the needed transformations for their development. 'If you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and make a change' (Michael Jackson, 'Man in the Mirror'). Any country's fate lies in the hands and abilities of its men and women. As Cassius tells Brutus in Shakespeare's bloody play Julius Caesar, 'The fault [...] is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings'. Therefore, those that are charged with managing the transformers in the Public Service must be given a prominent place around the table where strategies for transforming the Public Service are formulated. This has not been the case in many countries. In most cases, strategies for public service reform have been formulated by external international consultants, without much involvement of nationals, let alone human resource managers. This needs to be corrected. The very first institutional transformation that needs to be made, then, is to provide a structural arrangement in public service that institutionally puts human resource managers in positions of strategic planners, or at least of participants in the strategic planning process, to influence the transformational shifts in the Public Service.

## TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

‘Governments are increasingly recognising that they cannot regulate themselves out of the problems they currently face – and that they must learn to look outwards to improve their effectiveness’ (Gash, 2016). Looking outward means also enabling creativity and innovation in the Public Service to find new solutions to emerging challenges. Different governments, different people in different places in the world, using different strategies – these are bringing about bold, rapid, applicable management innovations in governments to improve delivery of services and other government functions. From Indonesia, where the government ‘is helping citizens on the street to monitor and verify the delivery of State services’ (Maxwell and Schwarz, 2012); through Georgia, where a ‘reform minded government tries to break down silos to speed up government services’ (Renee Paradise and Ken Schwartz, September 2011); to Chicago in the United States, engaging people in the planning and budgeting process – participatory budgeting (‘Participatory Budgeting in Chicago’) – governments are under pressure to transform the way they deliver public services. This pressure will increase, especially for the developing world, with the urgency of achieving the SDGs. The transformation will continue to take place in countries that encourage creativity and innovation in the Public Service. Looking at innovations in different countries, one becomes curious about the factors that explain the success in innovation in the Public Service.

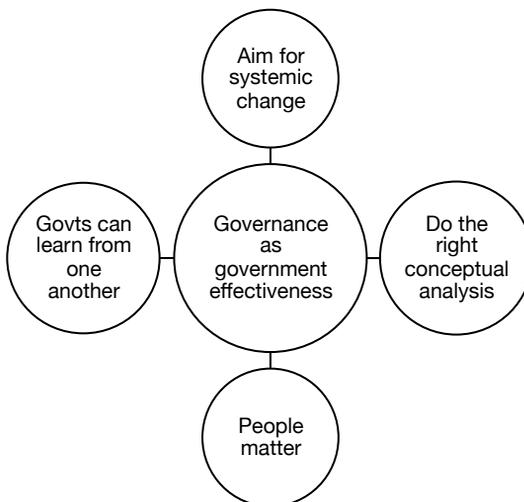
As Figure 7 makes clear, it is clear that creativity and innovation are unlikely to take place, let alone succeed, in a context where top leadership does not encourage and support them, where there is no or little incentive or rewards for individuals who are creative and who come up with useful innovations, where experimentation and evaluation are discouraged, where learning from outside is not encouraged and where the value in diversity of the human resource is not tapped. Transformational leadership is needed to harness such innovation success factors to transform the Public Service and make it a sharp tool for implementing the 2030 Agenda and for achieving the SDGs.

**Figure 7 – Some of the success factors for creativity and innovation.**

One of the prominent personalities who tried to transform the public sector is Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Figure 8 lists the five lessons he learned in the process of this transformation. The first one is that one has to aim for systemic change rather than ad hoc piecemeal change. The second is that to succeed in transformation, one must do the right conceptual analysis. The third is that transformation must have people's interest and well-being at the centre because, more than anything else, people matter in the transformation of the Public Service.

**Figure 8 – Five lessons learned by Tony Blair about leading government transformation.**

Source: Blair (2012)



Transformation has to be for the people and must be undertaken with the engagement and ownership of the people. The fourth lesson is that governments can and should learn from one another as one of the ways of inspiring transformation. The fifth lesson is that governance needs to be seen as government effectiveness, in this case in the delivery of public services that matter in the lives of people.

## CONCLUSION

The pursuit, with relative success, of the Millennium Development Goals did not eradicate poverty, nor did it eradicate inequality. As the world embarks on the second leg constituted by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and with world leaders acknowledging that poverty eradication is the greatest challenge facing the world, all actors need to recast their thinking on how differently

they need to work and what different actions they need to take in order to register greater and better achievements, this time leaving no one behind. The Public Service, being a critical actor, therefore needs to undergo transformation in its ideological outlook (especially if it has to contribute to eradicating inequality and leave no one behind in access and consumption of essential services) and its structural arrangement (if it has to be inclusive and collaborative); it must be creative and innovative (if it has to bring new ways of service delivery), open, professional, and highly ethical and accountable to be able to maximize outcome from the available meagre resources. Such a transformation in the Public Service will have to be initiated and sustained by a transformational leadership with very capable, empowering human resource managers in the Public Service. All transformation measures must be preceded by risk analysis balancing risk and realism. While transforming policy to pursue those policies that will adequately address the 2030 Agenda and SDGs is critical, it is equally critical that transforming policy be coupled with rigorous implementation. Priority for transformation should be what really matters for the people in terms of results and outcomes. Research and think tanks, including universities and MDIs for analysis and innovation incubation must be used for transformation.

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