

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ON THE CONFEREMENT OF  
CAPAM’S GORDON DRAPER AWARD, 2008  
BY  
ITS INAUGURAL AWARDEE,  
PROFESSOR ADEBAYO ADEDEJI, CFR**

On October 7, 2008 I received a telephone call from Ms Ada Wong of CAPAM Secretariat informing me of the decision of the Board of Directors to select me as the inaugural winner of the **Gordon Draper Award of CAPAM** – an award that has been established to acknowledge and honour the legacy of Gordon Draper, CAPAM’s Inaugural President. Subsequently, I received the letter from the Executive Director, David Waung, formally conveying this decision to me on behalf of CAPAM’s President, Honourable Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and the Board of Directors. I do, indeed, appreciate the honour and gladly accept it with gratitude.

I was present at the “creation” of CAPAM in 1994 and I am greatly impressed by the progress it has made in its less –than-one-and-a-half-decades of existence. Well done and hearty congratulations! As one of the founding fathers of the 37-year old AAPAM – African Association for Public Administration and Management – and its President *ad interim* from 1972 to 1975 and elected and re-elected from 1975 until 1985, I do

appreciate the complexity of the challenge which must have confronted you in CAPAM since 1994. Indeed, like CAPAM, AAPAM instituted its own Gold Medal Award and elected me as its first recipient in September 2007. I am grateful to both institutions for remembering an old fogey like me!

I am really sad that I cannot be with you at the 2008 CAPAM Biennial Conference in Bridgetown, Barbados to personally receive the award. I am glad, however, to inform you that your honourable President, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi has graciously agreed to come over to Macedonia and help! But I will certainly be with you in spirit.

The reason for my absence in Bridgetown is that the African Heads of State and Government whose countries are participating in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of the African Union will be holding an Extraordinary Summit Meeting in Cotonou, Republic of Benin on 25 and 26 October 2008 to, among others, peer review Nigeria and Burkina Faso in all the fields of governance – democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development. The African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons (APR) is the executive arm of the entire review process responsible for preparing the process leading up to the peer review by Heads of State and Government. As I am the current chairperson of the APR Panel, I must be in Cotonou Benin

Republic from 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008. And in preparation for the summit, I already have an appointment with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia who is the Chairperson of the APRM Forum (the Committee of Heads of States and Governments participating in the Mechanism) on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008. I hope therefore that you will kindly excuse my absence. Let me assure you that I will prepare myself for any subsequent meeting or conference which CAPAM might wish me to attend, provided I am given enough notice.

My absence is all the more painful to me because I am missing the great opportunity of being among you during your interactive sessions. I understand that the theme of the 2008 Conference is **Continuing the Shared Journey: Achieving Public Service Excellence** No discussion could be more opportune given the present meltdown of the global financial system and the debunking of the traditionally held belief that the market, left to itself, is capable of resolving all the dilemmas and challenges thrust upon the people and their economies; that the market should be free to deliver signals of what to produce while the customers and consumers should be free to respond through their effective demand; and, that the culture of **universal commodification** will consequently lead to much greater individual freedom. However, given the intensity of the current banking and financial

crisis, there is an emerging consensus that we can do ourselves considerable damage if we continue to put too much faith in the market.

This is a fundamental paradigm shift which poses a great challenge to the Public Service in majority of Commonwealth countries. Until the 1980s, and particularly between the end of World War II and the early 1970s, virtually all the countries of the Commonwealth, especially the new Commonwealth members, had mixed economies with vibrant public sector which were as proactive as the private sector. The public sector under the surveillance of the Public Service focused not only on the provision of physical, social and human infrastructure but also on the ownership, direction and management of the directly productive sector including banking and financial services.

The collapse of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s was accompanied globally by the resurgence of liberal democracy and neo – liberal economics. The linkage and the attempt to forge a linear relationship between the duos was fully sanctioned and supported by the World Bank, the IMF and the International Community as the Washington Consensus. At the domestic level, marketisation has meant reduced state intervention, reduced subsidisation and increased privatisation.

However, there is no evidence of such a linkage historically. And statistical evidence supports no such trade-offs. Unfortunately the linkage has been at a cost which the world is now paying in trying to resolve the meltdown in the financial and banking sector. The five pillars on which true democracy must be built have as a result of the linkage been compromised. These are justice and the supremacy of the rule of law; human rights; the sovereignty of the people; empowerment and accountability; and, transparency. Justice, which encompasses equity and fair play is related to the other four in the same manner as the work of the architect is related to that of masons, joiners, wood-carvers and sculptors working under the architect's direction. This architectonic nature of justice accounts for that element of restraints without which civilisation and progress will be hampered.

Justice, equity and fair play are qualities which bind people together in a state. The survival of societies is possible only in so far as their members and the various institutions and functionaries exhibit self-restraint, fairness, equity and justice in the exercise of their power. Where greed, selfishness, dishonesty, infidelity, corruption and lack of trust are pervasive, justice is conspicuously absent. It is now abundantly clear that true democracy requires the pursuit of a holistic social economy paradigm which

alone can lead toward a development and transformation process that is socially just, economically productive, ecologically sustainable and politically and economically participatory and culturally vibrant. Indeed, marketisation best serves the interest of the people when it functions in tandem with a robust social economy founded on the values of cooperation, sharing, trust and mutual obligations (See Adedeji 2003\*).

This should indeed constitute the greatest challenge to the public service in the Commonwealth, particularly the new Commonwealth.

Once more, let me wish your 2008 Conference a resounding success.

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\* Adebayo Adedeji, “The resurgence of democracy – It is not just about elections and neo-liberal economic strategy”, COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING 2003 (Abuja, Nigeria, December 2003); Pages 19 – 23.