

CHAPTER 2

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter an overview was provided of the need and necessity for public service accountability in general and within the schooling sector in particular. This chapter sketches the context for the demand for accountability in the public sector in general before making a more detailed analysis of the South African situation. In order to achieve this objective, working definitions of the concepts of accountability and good governance are provided to guide and serve as an analytic foundation for elaborating context specific strategies and policies used to meet accountability challenges.

2.2 THE NOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is not a simple notion to understand and effectively apply in a complex public sector context. The pressures that are brought to bear on governance and management from various sources in society have come to affect the way in which the notion of accountability is defined, interpreted and applied. This is precisely so because the notion of accountability assumes different meanings, depending on the context and the issues at stake. Heim (1995) draws a useful distinction between *accounting* and *accountability*. He states that the difference between the two concepts lies in the fact that accounting is primarily descriptive whereas accountability is essentially evaluative. This therefore means that accountability has to do more with how the information gathered is used to effect change. It is in this context that the concept of accountability will be explored in the paragraphs that follow. The discussion that follows highlights the different dimensions of this concept with a view to narrowing them down to the focus of this study.

2.2.1 Accountability: A Conceptual Analysis

Accountability in the context of this study will be defined as it relates to the management, governance and delivery of government programmes generally, and public education delivery in particular.

Conventional media and the general public often interpret accountability as a process of assigning blame and punishing wrongdoing. According to Ahrens (2004), accountability has to do with holding politicians and officials responsible for their actions and also for ensuring that government policies are implemented. Ahrens further argues that politicians and public servants must also ensure that government services are not held ransom by narrow individual or stakeholder interests. Some define accountability as the driving force that exerts *pressure* on all those who are responsible for the delivery of public service (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). This pressure is necessary to enhance quality performance in public service (McNeil & Mumvuma, 2006). Guthrie and Schuermann (2010, p. 417) offer a more direct definition of accountability: '*The responsibility to justify and link money spent, decisions made, and activities performed by an individual or an institution.*'

Swilling and Wooldridge (1998) draw a useful distinction between what they call *bureaucratic accountability* where employees are held accountable upwards via the hierarchy for adhering to the rules, and *operational accountability* which focuses on making state employees more directly accountable to end-users, citizens and communities.

Heim (1995) also refers to bureaucratic and operational accountability as sources of accountability expectations. To these he also adds *legal accountability* which uses statutes to direct compliance and injunctions to induce compliance; *professional accountability* which uses peer review to maintain accepted professional standards; *political accountability* which uses processes of democratic control to influence and control the use of authority by elected officials and *market based expectations* that use

choice of providers within a regulated market to obtain value for money. He further makes the point that sources of accountability expectations derive from philosophical bases, traditions and settings. The different dimensions of accountability will be addressed later in this work. The common denominator in the four definitions advanced above is that accountability forces politicians and bureaucrats to be responsible and answerable to ensure that government policies are properly interpreted and implemented and that government services reach the intended target group. Failure on the part of responsible parties to deliver those services as expected would warrant an explanation and possibly a reprimand.

With the exception of the definition provided by McNeil and Mumvuma (2006) above, the other two definitions do not seem to adequately capture the complexities around the emergence of non-hierarchical relationships such as networks, partnerships and many other alternative service delivery approaches which are being experimented with currently. Contemporary management and governance arrangements do not necessarily lend themselves to hierarchical relationships and therefore newer forms of accountability relationships become necessary. In essence, responsibilities may not be conferred from senior to junior in a hierarchical manner. Effective accountability has more to do with greater clarity in managing relationships and partnerships in order to achieve set goals and outcomes.

In contrast to the negative interpretation of accountability as alluded to above, modern governance and public administration literature sees accountability more as a positive incentive, as an integral part of establishing effective relationships for getting things done and taking responsibility. In strengthening the newer forms of accountability relationships, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2002) introduces to the concept of accountability the notion of relationships. It defines accountability as a relationship anchored on a joint responsibility to deliver on expectations which have been agreed upon. In essence, the TBCS definition takes into account newer forms of accountability by recognizing that services are generally delivered jointly (through partnerships), and

that the nature of the partnership will determine the quality and relevance of the service delivered.

For the purposes of this study, the definition provided by TBCS (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat) will be adopted with some slight changes (bracketed) to read as follows: *Accountability is a (developmental) relationship based on the obligation (of key actors) to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance (outcomes) in light of agreed expectations* (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002, p. 1).

The revised definition above emphasises the fact that the accountability relationship must be developmental in nature and orientation. Since newer forms of accountability emphasise non- hierarchical relationships, the assumption is that they should be mutually beneficial to the accountability parties. To that effect, accountability relationships must be governed by enforceable agreements or contracts to ensure that the agreed upon objectives are realized. The second point of emphasis in the above definition is the inevitable link between performance and outcomes. Linking performance to outcomes should ensure that qualitative results are realised particularly as they relate to their impact on the target group or the beneficiaries.

Accountability for results/outcomes also means demonstrating that one has made a difference in those areas over which one has influence. This marks a departure from being accountable for outputs only to being accountable for the results achieved.

It suggests that one can be accountable for what one can influence (outcomes) and what one can directly control (outputs). Demonstrating the results achieved, including what one has influenced, provides evidence of effective accountability. Heim (1995) also adds an important dimension by stating that accountability may be directed towards either *process*, i.e. how something was done, or *outcomes* i.e. what results were accomplished. He refers to these two accountability positions as *procedural* and *consequential* accountability respectively.

With particular reference to the public sector, the view expressed by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2002) becomes useful when it states that accountability practices must be viewed as *'incentives in getting government right: in creating a management culture that is fact-based, results-oriented and transparent; and more broadly, in strengthening the relationship between government and citizens.'*

Ahrens (2002) refers to the relationship between government and citizens as the realm of *state society interface* where public sector institutions are linked to the needs and activities of the private sector and civil society and thereby ensuring direct involvement of citizens and NGOs in the design and implementation of development projects at the local level. Sobe (2006) asserts that accountability is one component of democratic governance that has in recent times gained a lot of currency. Like Ahrens (2002; 2009) he sees accountability as a description of the qualities of the relationship between the governed and the governing.

Embedded in the notion of developmental accountability is the concept of 'educative accountability' which, according to Macpherson (1999) brings a balance between political and productive accountability with more professional and developmental forms. He also expresses the view that education accountability policy must 'prove' and 'improve' public education and advance accountability policy making capacity in schools, and that accountability criteria and processes must enhance learning conditions, professional development and school improvement. Reeves (2004) concurs with Macpherson (1999) and adds the notion of holistic accountability which he characterizes as including not only effects but also causes. It does not only include variables within the school but also many other factors that significantly influence student achievement. For Reeves (2004), holistic accountability does not only restrict itself to student scores, it entails measurements of how teachers, school leaders, policy makers and parents influence the education of children. It therefore goes beyond quantitative data and extends to information that is qualitatively obtained.

The foregoing discussions have attempted to shift the understanding of the notion of accountability from its generally negative connotation to a more positive perspective. Reeves's (2004) notion of holistic accountability has resonance with the notion of developmental accountability as adopted in this study. The notion of developmental accountability carries with it the potential for improvement and growth. It is particularly imperative that accountability practices within the public sector are aimed specifically at getting the government right by ensuring that the general public receive the services they are entitled to in line with agreed upon service standards and norms.

Given the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional nature of accountability, the following paragraphs discuss the different dimensions and perspectives of the notion of accountability as it applies to the public sector.

2.2.2 Accountability: Dimensions and Perspectives

Since accountability is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept, several tools are used to hold governments accountable. Accountability mechanisms vary widely from one country to the other. They are therefore country and context specific. Many factors such as the existing political institutions, bureaucratic capacities, private sector operations, history, and cultural characteristics of a country all play a role in defining and shaping the tools by which to hold countries accountable. In effect, particular tools are employed to suit particular purposes. According to Ahrens (2002), however, the existence of a particular tool does not guarantee its effective implementation.

For the purposes of this study, the following perspectives and related tools aimed at enhancing accountability will be discussed briefly. It must however be borne in mind that the distinction drawn between the different perspectives is for convenience and does not in any way undermine their interrelatedness. They remain interdependent and mutually reinforcing. From an analytical perspective, however, it is useful to distinguish them.

2.2.2.1 Political Accountability

Political accountability is the willingness of politicians and policy makers to justify their actions and to accept electoral, legal, or administrative penalties if their justification is found lacking. Accountability in representative democracies is a key requirement of good governance, not only in governmental institutions but also in the private sector and other organisations that must be accountable to the general public and their stakeholders. Often in democracies the constitution and elections are conceived as constituent parts of accountability. Elected public officials are often called upon to ensure public participation and consultation in policy making processes through public hearings leading up to the development of green and white papers. They could also be called upon to respond to parliamentary questions generated by the general public (Turner & Hulme, 1997).

In the public sector in particular, and in countries where the parliamentary system prevails, there is a tradition of ministerial accountability where ministers are individually accountable to Parliament for their own actions and the ministries for which they are responsible. Accountability to Parliament is through the minister who remains answerable to Parliament (Hay, Lister, & Marsh, 2006). Departmental officials are accountable to the minister for the operations of their departments. They are not directly accountable to parliament; however, they may be required to explain to parliament the operations of their departments on behalf of their minister. In this sense, they could be answerable to parliament but remain accountable to their minister. Ministerial accountability remains the cornerstone of a democratic parliamentary system. The South African democracy displays the same features as described in this paragraph.

Ahrens (2002) argues that political accountability and accountability for public policy performance are not necessarily the same. He maintains that accountability for the outcomes of policies cannot be guaranteed by political elections. In his view, political accountability may become less effective as government assumes more responsibility and undertakes more actions on behalf of the citizens. Lack of accountability reduces the

credibility of political authorities as economic partners. When this happens, economic activities decline because economic development cannot flourish in an uncertain political environment. This could also undermine political stability in a country.

Dorn (1998) argues that statistical accountability (cf. 2.2.2.4) has gained dominance in recent times as a result of the deteriorating credibility of public institutions, because what public leaders say is often in contrast with what the public know and experience. Statistical information, he contends, provides a national framework for discussion because numbers have visible power in public debates. Statistics have taken a prominent place in political culture because a number connotes objectivity or, at the very least, legitimacy (Dorn, 1998).

It would appear from the above discussions that effective accountability is achieved when government shares its responsibilities with components of civil society, including economic actors. This would entail networks of institutional arrangements linking different branches of government, external audit agencies, public organisations, non governmental organisations and the private sector. Information sharing has also become a powerful tool in enhancing political legitimacy in many countries as Dorn argues above.

In this way, mechanisms that strengthen micro level accountability become more important with respect to both government activities at the regional and local levels as well as to sector specific actions (Ahrens, 2002). According to Kinsler and Gamble (2000) School Board elections are an example of political accountability as applied in education.

It is evident from the above discussions that elected public officials are bound to justify their actions to those who elected them into public office. However, in doing so, they are also expected to put in place credible mechanisms to ensure that their performance is supported by evidence. To that effect, public participation and evidence based performance become critical if public office bearers are to meet the demands for political

accountability. The following section will focus on public accountability as another dimension of the notion of accountability.

2.2.2.2 Public Accountability

Administrative reform is aimed at improving or modernising bureaucracies to bring about the desired changes in the public sector. Many strategies and techniques that comprise administrative reform can be classified under the rubric of restructuring. According to Turner and Hulme (1997), the notion of restructuring entails a wide range of interventions aimed at performance improvement in the public sector with a view to promoting accountability. These interventions, intertwined with conditions imposed by international funding agencies, include the following: privatizing state institutions; reducing the size of bureaucracies; eliminating red tape; decentralising authority and improving organisational responsiveness to clients; building management capacity and promoting greater accountability.

The goals of public sector reform are generally aimed at meeting the demands for increased quality of services to the citizens/clients and also making public servants more accountable for their decisions and actions. According to Stoesz, Guzzetta and Lusk (1999), state failures in service delivery occur because the public sector is not subjected to any of the forces that compel private providers to strive towards efficiency. They argue that because public servants spend other people's money, they tend not to manage their budgets effectively and are neither accountable to the electorate nor to the market. It is for these reasons that state failures generally happen.

According to the above authors, state failures occur in three broad areas: political, economic and functional incapacity. Political failures reflect the tendency on the part of government to avoid action on critical policy issues. Economic failure relates to the substandard services provided by government at high costs. Functional failures would include the ineffectiveness of government programmes and projects.

Stoesz *et al* (1999) contend that concern for state failures has led to advocacy for institutional reform or restructuring which entails the downsizing of the public sector, deregulation of the market place, balancing national budget, bureaucratic reform and reorientation, privatization of state-owned enterprises, structural adjustments and improved accountability in political decision making.

Heeks (1998) and Kinsler and Gamble (2000) present a range of accountabilities for public servants. These include managerial accountability, legal accountability, professional accountability, public accountability, financial accountability and political accountability. The discussions that follow are premised on the general trend adopted in this study that views accountability as multidimensional, developmental and relationship based.

Public accountability is generally difficult to ensure because in most cases performance is evaluated against inputs (e.g. budgets) and not on the outcomes of government programmes. For instance, bureaucratic accountability (Kinsler & Gamble, 2000) might focus on ensuring that the bureaucracy functions optimally through adherence to the rules i.e. regularity, or on the performance of the public service to achieve set goals efficiently and effectively i.e. performance accountability. The notion of operational and hierarchical accountability as presented by Swilling *et al* (1998) seems to support this view. Heeks (1998) also argues that IT-based accountability systems have been largely funded by finance providers to support financial accountability, and as a consequence public servants have been more accountable to central governments or to aid donors and less accountable to the general public. In addition, the absence of external watchdogs or monitoring agencies in many countries limits the effectiveness of accountability. Equally, internal hierarchical mechanisms of accountability within the public administration are often unreliable and ineffective.

Public accountability has to do with the development, effective implementation and enforcement of policies and the design of development enhancing reform programmes as well as ensuring efficient use, stewardship and allocation of resources. According to the

Treasury Board of the Canada Secretariat (2002) current approaches to accountability in the public sector stress the need for *accountability for results* as opposed to accountability for inputs and outcomes. In essence, this shift places more responsibility on the manager to influence the achievement of the intended results. To be able to achieve this, the manager must have the resources and the necessary authority, greater management flexibility and skills to influence programme outcomes. At a practical level, clear delegation instruments and accountability contracts/agreements must be in place. Included in these contracts or agreements are goals, targets indicators and measures relating to the results achieved, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004; 2008). In many instances, governments encourage their public servants to be more performance and results oriented.

Different strategies are used by different governments to improve public service delivery and to meet increasing demands for public accountability. Some have opted for budgets that are based on performance and auditing of results and not just spending allocations. Others, according to Turner and Hulme (1997), introduced competition to improve efficiency, for example certain services could be contracted out, i.e. outsourcing. In other instances surveys and other social science tools are used to assess the impact of policies on individuals and communities.

Other countries have tended to focus on improving the relationship between the public sector and the general population. This approach identifies the public as customers and the quality of services provided will be based on the level of customer satisfaction. The South African Batho Pele initiative, which will be discussed in greater details later in this work, is an example of this approach. Public accountability aims specifically at making the public sector responsive to the needs of the general public. It is about holding public servants responsible for the services they render to their clients.

Sobe (2006) makes the point that programmes associated with new public management emphasise cost control, financial transparency, decentralisation of management authority

and the enhancement of accountability to customers for the quality of service via the creation of performance indicators.

From the discussions above, it is clear that strategies aimed at public sector reform are intended to bring about interventions that would promote service delivery. In essence, public accountability has to do with ensuring that the public sector meets the demands for increased quality of service to the public while at the same time holding public servants accountable for their decisions and actions. In the context of this study, public accountability principles will be discussed in greater details as they relate to the school sector.

In the following section the complex relation between the government and the economic actors in promoting development, i.e. economic accountability, will be discussed.

2.2.2.3 Economic accountability

Economic accountability has to do with the extent to which government can intervene in the economy to promote growth without adversely affecting the mechanizations of the free markets logic. Economic accountability in effect calls upon government to create a regulatory environment conducive to economic growth. This would also entail putting in place policies and regulations that would not only promote economic activities, but also ensure that the economic actors conduct their businesses in an ethical manner.

According to Weil (2005), government intervention in the economy can range from minimal intervention (*laissez faire*) to complete domination of the means of production. While the role of government in the economy remains a bone of contention, there are good reasons, according to Hayami and Godo (2005) why this intervention is necessary. It is justifiable on two grounds. Firstly government has to provide particular goods (public goods) that the private market cannot provide because there is no practical way to charge those who benefit from such goods. Services provided by the courts, police and the army serve as good examples of public goods. Other public goods that are critical for

determining economic growth are the rule of law, i.e. the capacity and capability of developing, implementing and enforcing laws, particularly the enforcement of contracts.

The second reason for government intervention in the economy is to regulate externalities, defined by Hayami and Godo (2005, p. 246) as: “*the incidental results of some economic activities that affect people who do not control the activity and are not intentionally served by it.*” Education is one example of such externality because it is generally argued that education provides benefits to society beyond those that the individual receives. It is for this reason that government must have a role to play in encouraging and promoting education.

Weil (2005) further argues that government is expected to play a role in the regulation of negative externalities such as pollution. Other areas that call for government intervention in economic policies entail regulating monopolies, putting in place mechanisms to regulate income redistribution within society and effective tax collection systems. The case for government intervention in the economy is not in question. The concern of many economists, however, is that of the degree of this intervention. Government intervention can either promote or impede economic growth and development. Many developing nations are particularly guilty of behaviours that impede growth and promote corruption and kleptocracy. Recent developments point to a move away from government dominance of the economy to deregulation and privatization of some functions of government.

According to Ahrens (2002) results or performance based budgeting is a direct consequence of budget constraints, changing economic environments and the demand from citizens for higher quality services. This leads to the emergence of the notion of value- for- money. Economic accountability with regard to public finances relies on devices such as accounting and auditing systems that are suitable to evaluate the performance of public entities. It therefore calls for the establishment of legal and regulatory institutions and competition policies.

Ahrens (2002) further argues that the laws and policies that regulate the economy and society as a whole must be clearly communicated to the business sector and private individuals and the application and enforcement of these laws must be consistent and impartial. This means that government activities and operations must be regulated and predictable. A rule based system will provide assurance against arbitrary political interference in private transactions. Again, adequate organisations and institutions like independent central banks, anti-trust agencies and independent judiciary are keys to the enhancement of predictability and accountability. The need for the establishment of agencies of constraint and monitoring devices for overall economic policies at national and sub-national levels of the system remains central in order to promote economic accountability.

Weil (2005) states that most governments use tools such as the rule of law, regulations governing private sector behaviour, trade policies, etc. to influence economic development and enhance accountability. He also makes the point that on average, governments in poor countries more often behave in a manner detrimental to growth than did rich countries when they were at a similar stage of development.

The discussions above point to the complex role that the government has to play in promoting the enhancement of economic activity in order to advance growth that is so necessary in most developing countries. Economic accountability demands that governments must put in place laws and policies that regulate the economy and society as a whole. The enforcement and application of these laws must be consistent, impartial and predictable.

2.2.2.4 Statistical Accountability

Statistical accountability has been highlighted as one of the key elements of accountability. It has been widely used in the education sector to hold educational institutions accountable as will be illustrated in chapter 3 of this work. The following paragraphs will provide a brief discussion on what it entails.

The power of statistical information in service delivery in general cannot be denied because numbers denote objectivity and legitimacy. Dorn (1998) points out that statistics are often used to good effect by politicians, journalists and social critics and commentators. Statistical accountability systems are therefore important within the realms of public accountability. He further makes the point that over the last century, statistics have taken a prominent place in political culture. Statistical information could reflect a range of policy inducing issues like unemployment rates, poverty rates, poll results, schooling related statistics such as dropout rates, and the overall performance of the schooling system. These data must be accessible to the general public to inform public debates. Statistical accountability relates closely to what Heim (1995) calls consequential accountability that is results driven. He contends that many education systems are inclined towards consequential accountability and this tendency leads to *accounting* and not *accountability*.

The production and presentation of statistics has always focused attention on issues perceived to be of public interest. The debate around statistical accountability is essentially about whether statistics alone are adequate to inform policy debates or whether they should be complemented with other sources of information. There are those like Weis (1988) who seem to suggest that statistics by themselves are powerful enough to inform policy debates. Others (Dorn, 1998) caution about the heavy reliance on statistics because they do not tell the whole story. Starr (1987), in support of the concerns raised by Dorn in the paragraph above, has also noted that numbers do not provide strictly factual information. He however concedes that statistical information has assumed such great powers that many decisions are taken based purely on statistics.

Despite some of the identified limitations of statistical accountability, the value and availability of credible data as a source of information for accountability purposes cannot be disputed, as alluded to elsewhere in this work. The challenge, however, remains how the data are utilized and for what purpose they are used.

Coleman (2002; 2003) sees a direct link between education quality and accountability. Quantitative measures tend to be used to good effect to measure education quality in the majority of cases. Since accountability entails, among others, giving information to others about the performance of the school, the most cost effective way of providing this information is through quantitative data because this method is more cost effective than more elaborate accountability measures. Coleman (2003) further makes the point that research on school effectiveness has tended to concentrate on quantitative indicators of success, particularly examination results.

Arguments for greater public accountability, transparency and value for money through target setting and performance indicators (Ozga, Seddon, & Popkewitz, 2006) point to the growing significance of statistical accountability. In some countries like Canada, emphasis is placed on accountability through performance audits in all government departments. According to Sobe (2006) accountability has become synonymous with the collection and reporting of data. He contends that modern governments are characterized by continuous goal-setting, auditing, accounting, self-scrutiny and reporting on performance.

Guthrie and Schuermann (2010) also make the point that a critical first step in solving problems is to identify and fully understand them, and one powerful mechanism for specifying and comprehending problems is to collect data and analyse them in order to inform decision making.

Another key dimension of accountability relates to the level at which accountability is demanded because accountability varies in relation to the level of responsibility as discussed below.

2.2.2.5 Accountability and Autonomy

While accountability focuses more on the monitoring and reporting on the link between 'inputs' and 'outputs', autonomy on the other hand is concerned with the desire of

managers and professionals to be trusted to use the resources at their disposal wisely because they possess the knowledge appropriate for the tasks they are expected to perform. Autonomy therefore has more to do with some degree of freedom to work with minimal interference and hierarchical oversight.

Autonomy and accountability, according to Edwards (1991) function in a linked fashion in educational organizations. He further makes the point that rigid and unbending emphasis on accountability is likely to lead to an autocratic organisation, whereas unbridled autonomy holds the potential for anarchy. The answer to this dilemma therefore lies in maintaining a healthy balance between the two extreme positions. Professionals and managers can work simultaneously within guidelines and with a degree of independence. The following paragraphs focus on the different levels of accountability because each level of accountability determines the extent and effectiveness of the accountability relationship.

2.3 LEVELS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Ahrens (2002) distinguishes between three levels of governance. For the purposes of this work these levels will be related to accountability because the effectiveness, quality and extent of accountability will vary in relation to the level of responsibility. These levels: the macro, meso and micro will be discussed briefly in the paragraphs that follow.

2.3.1 Macro Level Accountability

Macro level accountability refers to the role of the national state to create the necessary conditions for economic growth and development in general. Effective macro level accountability relates closely to the dimensions of accountability discussed in the paragraphs above. It also relates to the principles of good governance i.e. adherence to the rule of law, separation of powers and overall administrative accountability.

2.3.2 Meso and Micro Level Accountability

Meso and micro level accountability occurs at sub-national levels. These include sectoral levels, specific functions, particular government agencies and ministries and their relations to stakeholders who could be the private sector, private individuals and NGO's.

2.3.3 Micro level Accountability

Micro level reforms are a prerequisite for effective public sector management and accountability. They are necessary in order to modernize public administration, to reduce corruption, to increase the credibility of reform measures, and to enhance accountability.

The three levels presented above are useful in delineating the different responsibilities at different level. While it is true that micro-level accountability is more important, it can be argued that the role and responsibility of the macro- level in providing the overall legal and legislative framework remains critical for the micro level operations and activities to happen effectively. State authority is important in the successful implementation of policies. The paragraphs that follow will discuss the notion of accountability in relation to a developmental state.

2.4 ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE NOTION OF A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

Successful implementation of policies cannot happen without state authority, organisational coherence and well structured relations with society. Evans (1995) points out that different kinds of state structures define the range of roles that the state is capable of performing.

The notion of a developmental (strong) state evolved from the following weaknesses displayed by many developing countries. Among others, Ahrens (2002) mentions the following:

- Inability to manage policy reforms i.e. those states that cannot commit to particular policies. They tend to merely react to demands and actions of powerful private actors, pressure groups and political parties.
- Legal systems are often based on weak laws and regulations and this allows for excessive leeway for executive or administrative discretion and thereby reducing predictability in the way the state conducts its business.
- Policy makers are not independent, they often collaborate or collude with powerful private actors they are actually supposed to control and supervise.
- Policies are dominated by too many market distorting interventions leading to their lack of credibility.
- Lack of effective enforcement devices make rules meaningless. Property rights and contracts are therefore not durable and enforceable.

Countries displaying the above characteristics are called soft or weak states (Turner & Hulme, 1997). The notion of (strong) developmental state was developed based on the growing economies of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Chang (1999) states that a state is developmental if it can create and develop an environment that promotes healthy economic and political relationship that can support continued industrialisation and growth. Johnson (1999) characterizes a developmental state as follows:

- A developmental state has the desire to break out of economic stagnation and under-development by promoting market enhancing policies
- Fights institutionalized corruption

- Creates political stability over the long term so that it can honour its long term commitments
- Sets national goals and standards that are internationally oriented and in keeping with international norms and conventions
- Insulates its bureaucracy from direct political influence so that it can function technocratically

The most distinguishing feature of a strong developmental state according to Johnson (1999) is the emphasis it places on bureaucratic autonomy, administrative capacities and capabilities, meritocratic standards in promotion and in recruitment and the creation of career opportunities and training for bureaucrats to improve their expertise and enhance their commitment. The other feature is that these states must be autonomous to formulate policies independently without undue influence of private pressure groups. That policy makers must not become captive to their major 'clients' especially those representing major private businesses.

Weil (2005) maintains that a developmental state must uphold the rule of law because developed economies rely on laws in order to function. This means that governments must have the capacity to enforce contracts, ensure the effectiveness and predictability of the judiciary and reign in crime and corruption.

Developmental states have, as one of their key priorities, the desire to promote development. This, in effect means that the quality of the lives of billions of people in the world must improve. One of the approaches adopted to improve human development, particularly, the poor, is the basic needs approach as discussed below.

2.5 ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE BASIC NEEDS/SERVICES APPROACH

One of the concerns confronting economists generally is that despite enormous strides made since the Second World War in improving the quality of life of the peoples of the world, the benefits of development have not reached over three billion inhabitants of the world. These billions still live in abject poverty, have no access to clean water, children die of hunger related diseases or are mentally and physically damaged because of improper or inadequate nutrition. It is for this reason that international agencies like the World Bank and the United Nations propagate for the reduction of poverty as the key objective of international development (Stoesz *et al.*, 1999). People centred development is now the key message in international development literature.

According to Stoeltz *et al* (1999) one of the most influential approaches to economic development is the basic needs strategy. It is based on the premise that economic growth is a necessary but insufficient condition for assuring the human development of a cross section of the population, particularly the poor. The basic needs approach stresses the human development of the poorest of the poor and most vulnerable members of society. It argues for the need to improve human welfare in economic, health, social, educational and political terms; that educational policies in particular should aim for universal and affordable primary and secondary education with particular attention given to girl education and the rural poor. Greater emphasis is also placed on child welfare, land reform and the development of human capital. The basic needs approach aim at directing the benefits of economic growth more equitably. Among others, it espouses the following values (Stoesz *et al.*, 1999):

- The elimination of absolute poverty should be the major goal of economic development i.e. removing obstacles to small scale business development and thereby empower the micro entrepreneur and small farmer.
- Policies must specifically aim at equalizing opportunities for women and children who are mostly at risk in the developing world.

- For economic policies to be effective, they must be interwoven with supportive policies in education, health and political sectors.

According to the World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) governments have a responsibility to promote the health and education of their citizens. The report however laments that many governments are falling short of meeting this obligation, especially to the poor because the poor, unlike the rich, are solely dependent on government service and cannot opt out of the public system. It is for this reason that government must be held accountable to meet its obligation to the poor. The basic needs approach is therefore a strategy aimed at ensuring that the services that contribute to health and education, i.e. water, sanitation, energy, transport, health and education – work for the people.

Embedded within the notion of accountability is the question of values and ethics as elaborated upon below:

2.6 ACCOUNTABILITY: Values and Ethics

Accountability relationships can be formal and informal. In both instances, effective accountability arrangements can be very difficult to put in place. The multi-partner relationships that have come to characterize alternative service delivery initiatives in the public sector calls for more open and transparent accountability arrangements. This is particularly critical if our definition of developmental accountability is to be realized. To be effective, accountability arrangements must therefore be underpinned by the following values and ethics (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002):

2.6.1 Shared Values

In both formal and informal accountability relationships, within government and between government and citizens, accountability becomes more effective if all parties involved

share common values of professionalism, honesty and integrity. In such cases, all parties feel collectively responsible and also take ownership for the results. This feeling of responsibility and ownership could also serve as an incentive to sustain the relationship. However, in pursuing programme outcomes, consideration must be given to ensuring that goods and services are provided with due process, equity and fairness.

2.6.2 Increased Transparency and Openness

The increased use of partnerships and other agencies in the delivery of public services calls for more open and transparent accountability arrangements. The need for clear definition of roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in an accountability relationship becomes imperative if the relationship is to be beneficial to the intended target group. One way of ensuring that all parties understand their roles and responsibilities is through clear delegation and performance contracts. Other ways of enhancing the relationships is to provide related performance information i.e. ensuring that the appropriate information on the performance of the partnering arrangement is publicly available. This might involve access to information and regular reporting by the partners.

2.7 ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability is related to responsibility. As Morrow (1989, p. 2) puts it: *They both belong in the same kinds of sentence frame, and both require a double object*, i.e. one is responsible **to** someone **for** something. Heim (1995) adds that the concept of accountability can be better understood by asking what is commonly understood as the basic accountability question: *Who is responsible for what to whom?* Both Morrow and Heim make the observation that the accountability frame/question bring to the fore a whole range of accountability providers and recipients. These could range from policy makers to officials and to the general stakeholder communities. Accordingly, a given provider can be engaged in multiple accountability relationship, and this, according to Heim (undated) is what makes accountability relationships very complex.

Morrow (1989) and Heim (1995) argue that a person cannot be held responsible or accountable for something which is not under her/his control or has not been delegated to do. Morrow (1989) further draws a distinction between *accountable* and *responsible*. In his view accountable is more than being merely responsible because accountability is firmly rooted in the notion of justification and obligation. Being responsible for something does not place one under an obligation to justify what you do. However, being accountable for something obliges one to provide a justification for what is done in relation to it. Related to the notion of accountability is also the notion of autonomy. For an individual to account means that that individual is given some form of autonomy/ authority/ delegation to act in a given situation. It therefore follows that accountability goes hand in glove with autonomy.

Rosano, Gates, Zaretsky and Kurilko (2005) acknowledge the similarities between accountability and responsibility. These authors however hold the view that responsibility is more inclusive and places the answerability for the success or failure of learners to parents, teachers, administrators and schools themselves. They further maintain that responsibility does not always entail blame, nor does it put a budget at the centre of the decision making process. In their view, all stakeholders must share in placing learners at the centre of the educational process.

The views expressed by Rosano *et al* (2005) above tend to view accountability in a negative sense. The values and ethics of accountability as discussed above (Ref. 2.2.2.8) are intended to do away with the negativity associated with the notion of accountability. The following paragraph provides a summary of the dimensions and perspectives of accountability.

2.8 SUMMARY OF DIMENSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a multi-dimensional, multifaceted concept as highlighted in the preceding paragraphs. It is steeped in service delivery and focused on holding office bearers responsible for their decisions and actions in delivering services to the general public. *Political accountability* holds ministers responsible for the delivery of their respective mandates. To achieve this, the public sector (*public accountability*) has to be re-engineered/ restructured to effectively respond to the needs of their communities

Since public accountability has to do with development, the relationship between government and business/economic actors must be regulated. This means that the implementation of the laws that regulate this relationship must be impartial, consistent and predictable (i.e. *economic accountability*). One way of enhancing credibility between government and the general public, particularly the private sector, is to maintain reliable data on service delivery because statistics generate debates and discussions (*statistical accountability*). The effectiveness, quality and extent of accountability varies in relation to the level of responsibility. In this context, the three *levels of accountability* become relevant.

The notion of a *developmental state* is premised, among others, on the need to create and develop an environment that promotes healthy economic and political relationship that supports growth and development. It is therefore imperative for any developmental state to uphold the rule of law because developed economies rely on laws in order to function. In addition, developmental states must embrace the *basic needs approach* to tackle the pressing needs of the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable members of society

Accountability relationships must be underpinned by strong *values and ethics*. Shared common values of professionalism, honesty and integrity are key in ensuring that all parties involved feel collectively responsible for the results. Finally, whilst the concepts of accountability and responsibility are often used interchangeably, it is important to bear

in mind that accountability is stronger and deeper in meaning and usage than responsibility. It is also worth noting that not only governments are to be held accountable for their actions but the private sector as well. The following section discusses some of the initiatives aimed at making corporate governance more accountable

2.9 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ahrens (2002) makes the point that not only are governments to be held accountable for their activities, but the private sector as well. According to Keasey, Thompson and Wright (2005) the notion of corporate governance gained prominence in the 1990's. Almost all the OECD countries are in the process of revising their corporate governance practices. The establishment of viable corporate governance systems has become a priority objective for emerging economies from Latin America to China. Corporate governance has become synonymous with good governance in the public sector. It was borne out of three inter-related concerns: the use of '*creative accounting*' devices which were believed to miscalculate the share holder value; secondly, the widely reported corporate failures of big companies that tended to conceal their financial weaknesses and finally, the growing unease over the rapid growth of executive remuneration.

Khoza (2006) states that developments and progress on worldwide implementation of corporate governance procedures have been rapid as a result of spectacular corporate failures such as WorldCom, Enron and Parmalat. The focus of all stakeholders has now currently shifted towards ensuring that there is greater responsibility, transparency and accountability in the operations of enterprises.

Despite a myriad of interpretations, there is general consensus that corporate governance is a system by which companies are directed and controlled. This means that the board of governors is given the freedom to move their companies forward without government interference. However, this freedom must be exercised within the framework of effective accountability to stakeholders. It must however be borne in mind that devices employed to improve accountability cannot be seen as efficient if they hamper the performance of the

firm. To that extent, Keasey *et al* (2005) and King 111 Report (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2009) advise that corporate governance must be about creating a healthy balance between those devices, mechanisms and structures that provide control and enhance accountability without impacting negatively on the economic growth of the enterprise.

According to King 111 Report (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2009) corporate governance is also promoted through the principle of 'apply or explain' where company directors are legally bound to act in the best interest of the company. The 'apply or explain' approach expects of the board of directors to explain how the principles and recommendations were applied, or if not applied, provide reasons. Whatever it does, the board of directors must always take cognizance of the governance principles of fairness, accountability, responsibility and transparency and to account to the market for any deviations. Indications are that corporate governance and leadership are set to remain at the top of the agenda for boards, shareholders and the media for the foreseeable future (Keasey *et al.*, 2005).

2.10 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

According to Ahrens (2002; 2004; 2009), effective accountability is anchored in competent policy making. This entails the capacity and capability of government to take and implement decisions at the right time, to manage public service delivery and to establish anti- corruption offices and external monitoring devices for the overall economic policies.

According to Heim (1995) accountability involves at least two parties and a mutually acknowledged relationship between them. He further states that this relationship involves delegation of authority to take some action from one party to the other. In the absence of delegation, Heim contends that there should be no expectation for accountability.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2002) maintains that effective, accountability presupposes the definition of expected performance criteria relating to the compliance with certain rules (values) or achievement of particular performance level. The sources quoted above point to the need for clear guidelines and principles if accountability practices and processes are to be effective.

In order to ensure that maximum benefits accrue out of accountability relationships, the following principles of effective accountability can be derived from the discussions above. These principles are generic and would therefore apply to the dimensions and perspectives of accountability as described under par. 2.2.2.

2.10.1 Clarity of role and responsibilities

This means that all parties involved in the accountability relationship must have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Such an understanding provides the context within which each party will perform and report. This also entails that delegation instruments must be in place. Morrow (1989) and Heim (1995) argue that without proper delegation, there can be no expectation for accountability.

2.10.2 Institutional Arrangements

According to the World Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) and Ahrens (2002), the institutional structure of the state is a key determinant in identifying the role it can play in promoting service delivery. State capability is therefore critical in ensuring that the principles of good governance are adhered to and accountability is enhanced. Sobe (2006) states that accountability could be linked to the dispersal of administration powers and the devolution of responsibility to lower levels of the system. Heim (1995), makes the point that decentralisation of authority can be seen as transfer of accountability. The World Bank (2004b; 2010) contends that dysfunctional public institutions limit accountability and cannot therefore promote sustainable development.

2.10.3 Clarity of performance expectation

Clarity of performance expectation relates to the need to agree on what each party is expected to contribute to the end results and the achievement of the desired outcomes. If the expectations are unclear, the outcomes are unlikely to be realized. On a practical level, this entails the signing of accountability contracts with goals and targets clearly spelt out.

2.10.4 Balance of expectations and capacities

This refers to the inextricable link between what is expected and available resources and capacities. At a broader level, the World Development Report (World Bank, 2002b) contends that the capability of the state must be matched with the tasks that the government can take on. If the balance between authority, skills and resources is not considered, the effectiveness of accountability will be undermined both at the level of the state and its institutions and at an individual level. For Guthrie and Schuermann (2010), the recruitment of the right people for the job will enable the manager to delegate authority and assignment. Delegation of authority has been identified as one of the key components of accountability.

2.10.5 Credibility of reporting

Timely, regular and credible reporting to relevant bodies and parties in the accountability relationship is a prerequisite for effective accountability. The results achieved must be described and presented in light of the agreed expectation and reported in reasonable timeframe.

2.10.6 Reasonableness of review and adjustment.

Regular review and feedback on the performance achieved should be carried out by accountable parties. Where expectations have not been met or underachievement

detected, corrective measures could be taken and if necessary, adjustments could be made to accountability arrangements and lessons learned noted. An accountability without follow up is unlikely to be effective.

2.10.7 Participation

Participation reinforces accountability because it provides the means by which the populace can hold their public officials accountable for their decisions and actions. Participatory mechanisms can further strengthen accountability at micro level by allowing beneficiaries to participate actively in the delivery of projects intended for them. Participation goes hand in glove with decentralisation of authority because centralization of decision making authority has been identified as one of the major impediments to effective performance in the public sector.

2.10.8 Ethics and Values

This refers to the need for openness and transparency. Moving from a blaming culture to a spirit of collectivism and a shared responsibility suggests that common values must be shared. Values of professionalism, collegiality, honesty, integrity and trust must form the basis for partnership in an accountability relationship. Equally, ethical values of equity and redress must inform how services are rendered to people (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002).

Underpinning the above is the need for the establishment of what Ahrens (2002) calls agencies of restraint (anti corruption offices and ombudsman). According to the World Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) service delivery is often weakened by corruption and its impact is mostly felt by the poor. This explains why many public sector reforms also prioritize the curbing of corruption Mobilisation of monitoring devices and oversight mechanisms at all levels of the system therefore becomes critical. Economic accountability calls for accounting and auditing systems that are suitable for public entities.

2.10.9 Universality

The principle of universality adopts the view that education accountability is everybody's business; starting from the learner in the classroom to her parents/ community and policy makers in central offices. It is system wide and therefore has implications for everybody who has a direct interest in improving learning outcomes.

2.10.10 Fairness

Fairness means understanding the rules of the game and ensuring that these are applied consistently and that everyone has the opportunity to play by the same rules. Without consistent application of the rules and the involvement of key actors, holistic accountability may not be realized.

2.10.11 Respect for Diversity

Respect for diversity should underpin everything we do to achieve effective accountability. The different contexts within which accountability has to happen must be understood and appreciated. Since schools are organizations in their own right, no two schools are the same. An analysis of every context in terms of people, other resources, socio-economic and cultural orientations will assist greatly in informing the development of an appropriate and responsive accountability framework.

2.11 GOOD GOVERNANCE

2.11.1 Introduction

In the following paragraphs the concept of good governance will be discussed briefly in order to enhance the understanding and application of the notion of accountability.

According to Turner and Hulme (1997) policy debates about governance remain at infancy because it is largely based on the definitions and approaches of major international development agencies whose models do not adequately accommodate the complex and varied societies of the developing world. Ahrens (2002:149) on the other hand, contends that the notion of governance is not new in the context of political development. According to him it seeks to answer two age old questions: Who governs? How well? The latter part of the question brings under sharp focus the question of good government (governance) which relates to institutional effectiveness and performance.

Pitye (2010) states that good governance is a prerequisite for preventing and combating corruption. He sees corruption as a challenge for good governance.

2.11.2 Towards a Definition of Governance

Two broad and overarching definitions of governance will be used to introduce the concept of governance. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1995) defines governance simply as 'the act or manner of governing' and Martin, McKeon, Nixon and Ranson (2000) refer to governance as a system of rule which constitutes the form and process of the public sphere.

The concept of governance gained prominence at the beginning of the 1990's and since then there has been a general understanding and concurrence that the quality of the country's governance structure is a key indicator in determining its ability to pursue sustainable economic and social development. However, despite this, there is no common definition agreed to by the majority of scholars as the following positions indicate:

Frischtak (1994) defines governance capacity as the ability to consolidate divergent interests within society and to develop credible policies that would advance public interest. Frischtak therefore sees governance as the ability to develop policies that would generally take cognizance of the diverse interests in society whilst at the same time ensuring that public interest remains paramount. Hyden (1992) on the other hand sees the

establishment and proper management of legitimate governing structures as key features of governance that would promote public credibility. For Bratton and Van der Walle (1992) governance constitute an interplay between the state and social actors with the purpose of seeking consensus within the political arena. Kjaer (1996) sees governance simply as the ability to determine and implement policies.

Most scholars do not offer a precise definition of good governance, they however tend to characterize the concept of governance. The key features of governance that emerge from the definitions provided above revolve around the need to consult the public in developing policies that affect them, the need to develop structures for the implementation of such policies and the capacity to implement such policies.

Authors like Swilling and Wooldridge (1998) draw a distinction between: (i) government as a state apparatus used to administer services on a mass scale to the public, and (ii) governance as a broader consultative process/approach in rendering such services. Swilling and Wooldridge (1998) further state that governance is the larger part of government because it involves other players and actor. In essence, government is the state machinery used to render services whilst governance relates largely to how those services are to be rendered with other role-players and actors.

Others still, see it as an analytic framework or as a means to promote sustainable development. Authors like Ahrens (2009) consider the distinction between government and governance as being unnecessary or even redundant. For him, governance is the country's ability to create a conducive environment for all the role players (individual actors, social groups, civic organisations and policy makers) to interact with each other to enforce the implementation of public policies and to improve private sector engagement. Glatter (2002) seem to concur with Ahrens by stating that governance is commonly spoken of as 'governing without government', to suggest that the task of governing has now outrun the capacity of governments to perform it.

From the definitions provided above certain points of convergence can be discerned. It is apparent that all the scholars quoted above agree that the participation of people in decision making, policy formulation and implementation would not only ensure consensus but would also enhance the legitimacy of government. Within this broad consensus, the different scholars would then choose to emphasise certain features of the notion of governance depending their different contexts and perspectives. Ahrens (2002) for instance in his definition highlights the private sector dimension of governance because in his view the notion of governance must be politically neutral.

The distinction drawn by Swilling and Wooldridge (1998) between government and governance above is useful because in juxtaposing the two notions, understanding becomes clearer. In this regard, governance is linked to democracy and also encompasses the attributes/characteristics of good governance as will be elaborated on in the latter paragraphs. Government on the other hand in both the definitions of Swilling and Samuels denotes the lack of involvement/participation of civil society in the delivery of programmes. To that extent the notion of government as defined does not necessarily accord with democratic values and principles as embedded within the notion of governance. Evans (2006) makes the point that from traditional government to collaborative governance has increased the range of non state actors in delivering public goods. He goes further to say that decentralisation is a way of reinventing government by opening it up to other stakeholders.

To elaborate further on the notion of good governance, the following characteristic features of good governance will be elaborated upon.

2.11.3 The characteristics of good governance

Since accountability is a key requirement of good governance, it becomes necessary to briefly discuss the characteristics of good governance as illustrated in figure1 below:

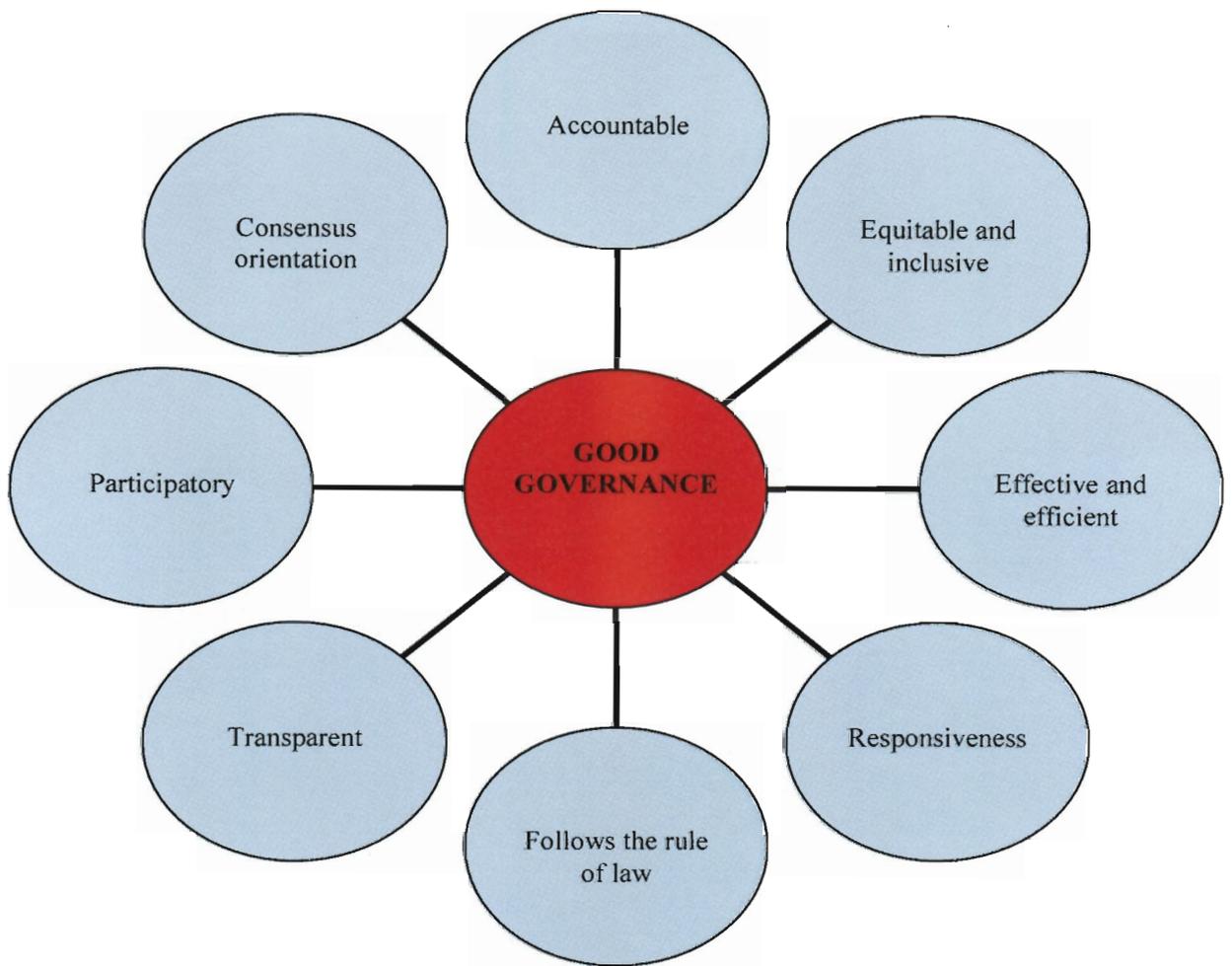


Figure 2.1: Characteristics of Good Governance (United Nations, 2006)

The seven (excluding accountability) major characteristics of good governance will be elaborated upon as follows:

2.11.3.1 Participation

In all representative democracies, participation by all citizens in decision making is imperative because it enhances the independence of citizens, their autonomy and self reliance whilst at the same time strengthening governance structures (Ahrens, 2002). It also reinforces accountability because it provides the means by which citizens may exercise influence and control over decisions and actions of their governors. It gives the citizens the voice to hold public officials responsible if they fail to perform their assigned functions. This could be effected directly or through intermediate representatives or institutions. Effective strategies must be developed to ensure that even the most vulnerable in society are heard and their views considered. The most common instrument for exerting political pressure from below in democracies is elections. Participation therefore provides channels to make policies responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

But, as Ahrens cautions, participation cannot work in all areas. In some areas, participatory mechanisms have to be modified or complemented. For example in instances where development issues require technical know how, technical expertise will be required with the concomitant understanding that the experts are held accountable to the public to ensure respect for cultural and social diversity

An example of approaches mostly used to enhance participation in development projects is the participatory rural approach (PRA). This entails greater beneficiary involvement in project identification, selection, design, implementation and evaluation. It ensures that local knowledge is utilized, activities are consistent with local resource endowments and the project process contributes to the empowerment of disadvantaged groups. The PRA exercise is usually undertaken by a trained NGO that works with villagers for two to three days. This process allows villagers to systematically analyse their problems, explore possible solutions and draw up a plan of action (Turner & Hulme, 1997). In the context of education, teacher involvement in decision making enhances their professionalism and commitment to their work (Martin *et al.*, 2000).

2.11.3.2 Rule of Law and Predictability

Kooiman (2006) states that all modern states engage in comprehensive legal action to regulate many aspects of the lives of their citizens. He makes the point that the state uses legal instruments in other entities in society to protect citizens even against the state itself. According to Ahrens (2002), the rule of law relates to clearly defined laws and policies that provide a regulatory framework for the economy and the society at large. These laws and policies must be clearly communicated to all affected parties. Equally critical is that these laws and policies be applied and enforced in an impartial manner.

In essence the rule of law is about ensuring the full protection of human rights, impartial enforcement of the laws through impartial judiciary and police force. In effect it means that the legal framework must be fair and also be implemented impartially. It suggests therefore that channels through which individuals can actively participate in enforcing rules are institutionalized. That access to independent judicial agencies is simplified and legal institutions are available to remedy the outcomes of discriminatory action on policy incompetence on the part of political authorities.

The World Bank Development Report (World Bank, 2002b) contends that good governance requires impartial and fair legal institutions that can guarantee the independence of judicial decision making from political interference. It also means that judges must become more accountable for their actions and judicial systems more efficient.

The existence of relevant organisations and institutions remains critical to enhance the credibility and predictability of the legal system. These institutions and organisations would include independent central banks, anti-trust agencies and an independent judiciary.

2.11.3.3 Responsiveness

This means that institutions and processes transmit information to stakeholders within reasonable timeframes. It emphasizes the need for feedback and a two-way communication culture.

2.11.3.4 Transparency

Transparency emphasises the need for timely, relevant and reliable information about market conditions, technological developments etc. It also means that information must be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by decisions and their enforcement (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006). It also means that decisions taken and their enforcement must be consistent with established rules and regulations.

2.11.3.5 Consensus Oriented

Given that there are many interest groups in any society, good governance requires mediation of the different interests to obtain broad consensus and to advance the best interest of the community. According to Kinsler and Gamble (2000) consensus on the purpose and goals of education of public education must always be sought in the delivery of education is to be effective.

2.11.3.6 Equity and Inclusiveness

This is about ensuring that all members of society have a stake in it and do not feel excluded or marginalised. It also means that all groups, particularly the most vulnerable are given opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

2.11.3.7 Effectiveness and Efficiency

It means that processes and institutions produce resources that meet the needs of society while utilizing available resources optimally (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006). It also refers to the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment. Evans (2006), states that the policy agenda in many nation states focuses on economic management and economic prudence by placing more emphasis on the principles of effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of their programmes.

2.12. SUMMARY

The principles of good governance discussed above are intended to provide a framework for good governance. It is anticipated that this framework will guide organisations and countries in their efforts to deliver services to their respective communities. It must be noted that even though adherence to these principles may differ from one context to the other, they remain useful in providing a checklist on good governance. All democracies would therefore display these characteristics in varying degrees. The following section will explore the notion of effective governance which is largely derived from the principles discussed above.

2.13 EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

The above discussions provided a broad characterization of good governance in the context of a democratic order. According to Ahrens (2002; 2004; 2009), governance *per se* is neither good nor bad since it is independent of the basic character of a political system (the regime type). He views governance as a country's capacity to bring all the stakeholders together with a view to implementing and enforcing public policies as well as coordinating private sector activities.

The governance framework presented by Ahrens above makes the notion of governance politically neutral. He argues that empirical studies do not provide evidence suggesting that the character of a political system is more effective in initiating and consolidating policy reforms to promote sustained economic development. He further makes the point that there is no one form of democracy, that forms of democracy differ considerably from one another along various dimensions. For instance, the parliamentary versus presidential system, policy making processes, political participation and their developmental outcomes. He further makes the point that most successful economic performers over the last three or four decades were, at least in their formative years, non-democracies. Acknowledging that a democratic order may be a desirable goal in enhancing economic growth and development, the governance concept that he proposes '*...rests on the premise that a democratic order is neither necessary nor sufficient for successful policy reform*' (Ahrens, 2002, p. 131).

He presents the following as characteristics of effective governance:

- Selection of the right policies and policy instruments
- Creation of suitable institutional arrangements to mobilize and manage human, physical and social capital to strengthen and enhance economic development
- A good legal and regulatory framework to promote private sector growth and to keep arbitrary political interference in check.

According to Kooiman (2006) effective governance would also not be achieved by involving the markets alone. It has to acknowledge civil society actors as serious governing partners.

2.14 IMPLICATIONS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Sobe (2006, p. 34 & 38) alludes to accountability as '*one component of democratic governance*' and a pattern of relations between '*the elected*' and '*the people*'. He further

indicates that a new era of accountability has taken root in recent times in the United States (US). And as a feature of the US social policy, accountability could be linked to the wide dispersal of administrative powers and the devolution of social welfare responsibilities to local levels. This is also evident in the dispersal and decentralised character of US public administration. He contends that reporting, disclosures and community notification provisions are governing strategies aimed at making governments accountable to their citizens. Kooiman (2006) asserts that in order to respond to diverse, dynamic and complex societal issues, governance must involve previously uninvolved partners. In diverse, dynamic and complex areas of societal activity, he argues, no single governing agency is able to realize legitimate and effective governing by its own.

Peters and Pierre (2006) report that debates on governance have raised questions about the role of government in effective governance against the backdrop of some globalization theorists and other commentators who argue that the role of the state is gradually diminishing. These theorists maintain that governance is a process increasingly dominated by other actors other than the state and its institutions. Peters and Pierre (2006) do not necessarily share the view of the “hollow state” theorists per se. They however concede that the diverse and complex societal demands have necessitated a new role for government in governance and that this new role entails its relationship to actors in its external environment. This new role need not undermine the role of the Steering role of the state in meeting diverse societal demands and expectations.

Sorenson (2006) share the views expressed by Peters and Pierre (2006) above but adds that while the state might have lost influence and autonomy in some areas as argued by ‘retreat’ argument, it has also been strengthened in others as indicated by the ‘state centric’ argument. He argues that change in sovereign statehood will always happen, leading to new strength in some areas and new weaknesses in others. He calls this approach transformationalist.

The notion of global governance, according to Rosenau (2006) relates to shifting boundaries, relocated authorities, weakened states and the proliferation of NGO’s at

local, provincial, national, international and global levels, introduces new governance arrangements and relationships that demands new thinking about government and governance if some puzzling developments across the globe are to be better understood. The notion of global governance remain useful in as far as it brings to the fore the profound and enduring transformations that impact on nation states. It leads to new ways of understanding ongoing global developments and how these in turn shape local and domestic policies.

According to the managing director of IMF, Camdessus (1997) good governance is important for countries at all stages of their development because it promotes and help foster public sector transparency and accountability. Consequently, the IMF focuses its attention on promoting good governance and therefore on improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector. The World Bank (2004b) also concerns itself with building efficient and accountable public sector institutions because the Bank contends that dysfunctional public institutions limit accountability and cannot therefore promote sustainable development.

Many other authors quoted earlier (Ahrens, 2002; Swilling & Wooldridge, 1998; World Bank, 2002b; 2004b) have alluded to the fact that the institutional structure of the state is a key determinant of its capacity and the role it can play in delivering the services expected of it. State capability therefore is critical in ensuring that the principles of good governance are adhered to and accountability is enhanced.

The notion of good governance as defined and discussed in the literature quoted above has the following implications for accountability:

- Participation reinforces accountability because it provides the means by which citizens hold their public officials accountable over their decisions and actions
- Participatory mechanisms can reinforce accountability at the micro level and make development projects more effective by allowing beneficiaries to become more

actively involved in project design and implementation and evaluation e.g. the PRA process as discussed above.

- Participation goes hand in glove with some sort of decentralisation because centralization of decision making authority has been identified as one of the major impediments to effective performance in the public sector. Public sector bureaucracies are commonly perceived as being geographically and socially distant from the people and often take decisions without knowledge of and concern for actual problems on the ground. As Turner and Hulme (1997, p. 151) puts it: ' *The popular remedy for such centralization is decentralisation*

The new governance arrangements present challenges for public sector accountability in the sense that managing multiple partners could dilute accountability if relationships are poorly managed.

Effective accountability will necessitate the creation of institutional arrangements and administrative structures which will support policy formulation and implementation. The notions of developmental state and effective governance carry with them the potential for enhanced accountability with their emphasis on state capacity and capability.

The three levels of governance discussed above (macro, meso and micro) have immediate relevance. They resonate with and are applicable to the notion of accountability. The distinction between the different levels of accountability would assist greatly in promoting effective accountability by delineating clear roles and responsibilities at different levels.

Effective governance is distinguished by its developmental outcomes and its relatively high degree of adaptive efficiency and shows high degrees of accountability. Effective accountability is content and context specific. It must take into account the tension between local dynamics and global imperatives i.e. it must address itself to different and diverse cultural contexts. Global governance must therefore acknowledge these nuances.

Contemporary states are not only accountable within their geographic boundaries; they are also expected to be globally accountable (global governance).

2.15 A FRAMEWORK OF ACCOUNTABILITY RELATIONSHIPS

Based on the discussions above, the following diagram (Fig 2.2) is an attempt to consolidate and integrate the features of accountability and good governance as elucidated above. The following diagram is derived from the definition of accountability that stresses the importance relationships in the accountability chain. It is anchored on the premise that accountability is essentially about strengthening the relationship between government and citizens (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002) and promoting state society interface (Ahrens, 2002) or what Sobe (2006, p. 34) refers to as a pattern of relations between ‘*the elected*’ and ‘*the people*’.

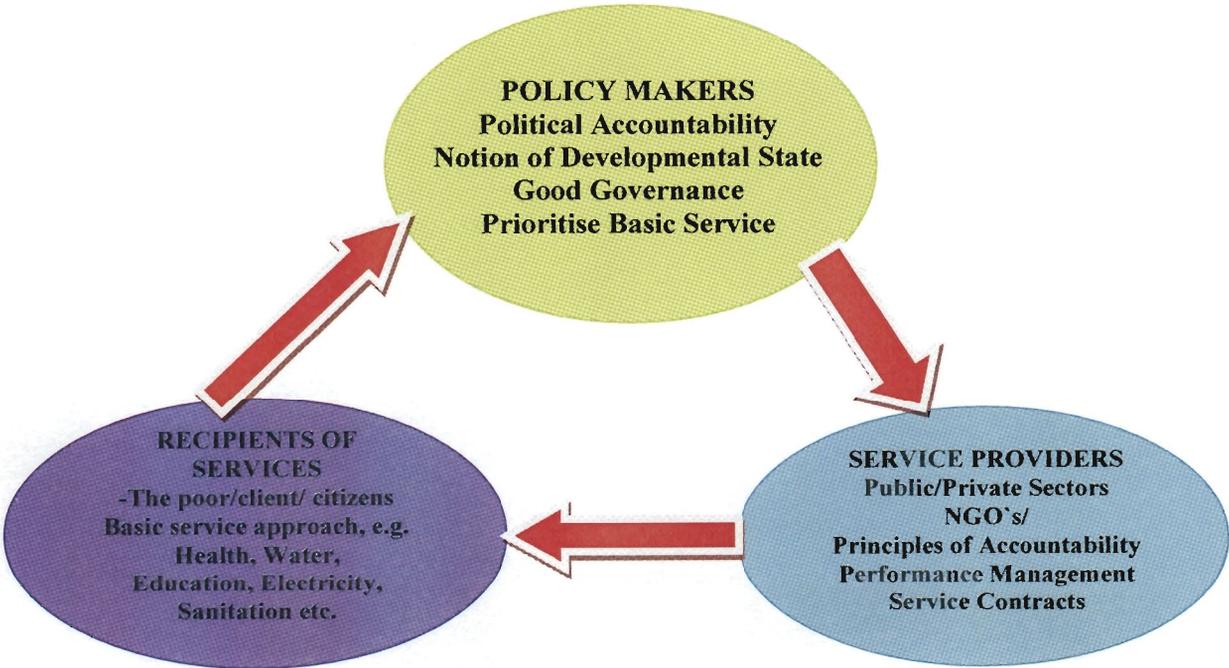


Figure 2.2 A Framework of Accountability Relationships

The above figure presents three sets of accountability relationships: the policy makers, the providers and the clients/ citizens who are in the main the recipients of government services. These relationships could in turn be described as follows:

2.15.1 The Policy makers

These would generally include the politicians whose responsibilities mainly entail the provision of basic services and the development of appropriate policy frameworks to create a conducive environment for service delivery. Since these are elected officials, they remain accountable to the citizens who elected them into office. In delivering these services, a variety of strategies are used. These would include the use of service providers who are in turn contractually held accountable by the policy makers to render expected levels of service to the citizens/clients. The role of the policy maker in this regard is to ensure that the service provider complies with service delivery norms and standards

2.15.2 The Service Providers

These could include private or public providers and NGO's. Different arrangements are made with policy makers to ensure that service delivery targets are met effectively and efficiently and within agreed upon timelines. This is usually achieved through the signing of service level agreements in the case of private providers and NGO's or performance agreements in the case of public servants. Service providers are expected to perform in accordance with agreed upon norms and standards as stipulated in service contracts

2.15.3 Citizens/ Clients

Included in this category are all those who are to receive services. It is particularly the poor who mainly rely on the public sector because they often cannot access alternative services. It is for this reason that clients as citizens hold policy makers accountable who in turn would hold the providers accountable for the extent and quality of service they provide to the recipients. For the citizens to exercise their power over policymakers, a

favourable environment must prevail. Good governance is one way of ensuring a conducive environment where citizens are allowed to exercise their democratic rights fully. Equally, citizens must be able to influence the actions of the service providers directly without doing so through policy makers.

The three way relationship explained above should, under normal circumstances, enhance service delivery and promote accountability. Unfortunately, it often happens that the relationship chain breaks down leading to service delivery failure. The involvement of international donors must always aim at strengthening accountability along the lines described above and not to undermine it. In the main, international donor organisations have tended to use their power and influence to strengthen this three way partnership.

This model has the potential to promote the principles of good governance and enhance service delivery in the sense that it attempts to bridge the gap between the policy makers, service providers and the recipients of services. It provides a vehicle for enhancing good governance and promoting accountability. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the role and influence of international organisations in shaping the policies of member countries.

2.16 THE CONTEXT FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

2.16.1 Introduction

According to Dehli and Taylor (2006) modern governments operate in complex environments impacted upon by globalization, the spreading of democratization, explosion of new information technologies and many other factors that have a bearing on their operations and practices. The combined influence of all these factors on the populace has forced many governments to respond one way or the other to the growing public demand for higher standards of ethics, transparency and accountability in the public sector.

Whilst the global developments have had profound influence in shaping the nature and policy making in almost all countries, it is in the developing countries that the impact has been most telling. From colonialism to the cold war era and beyond, including the contemporary challenges of market oriented reforms, each era has left a lasting legacy in the histories of most developing countries. Some of these historical legacies continue to influence and inform their practices and orientations and thus making it difficult for them to adjust to the dictates of the new world order. Needless to say that their adjustment is proving to be slow and in some instances very daunting.

Ahrens (2002) reports that the 1980's and 1990's experienced numerous market oriented reforms in developing and transitional economies. These reforms have been unprecedented in scale and scope. The challenge for many countries was how to sustain these interventions. To that effect, some guidelines became necessary to assist in providing some solutions for other countries especially the low developing countries and those in transition.

For the purposes of this study greater focus will be placed on the developing countries for the following reasons:

- These countries have been impacted upon by many external pressures and influences ranging from slavery to colonialism and the current market oriented reforms
- Because of these influences, adjustment to new developments have been slow given the socio-political complexities in these countries
- There is evidence to suggest that many of these countries often fall short of meeting the test of good governance as described in this work (Hayami & Godo, 2005; Todaro & Smith, 2003).

According to Stoesz *et al* (1999) the Africa of today continue to show resistance to strategies of modernization despite persistent effort on the part of the international

community to improve conditions on the continent. Africa, according to these authors, is not only the poorest of the developing nations, but it is also failing to keep pace with a growing global economy.

2.16.2 THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: External Influences on Governance and Accountability

2.16.2.1 Introduction

The impact of globalization on nation states has been profound and far reaching (Sobe, 2006). According to Rao (2000) the role of international institutions and other global bodies in influencing and shaping the policies, programmes and developments in most countries has been profound particularly in developing countries. Many developing countries have had to contend with external influences at some stage or the other in their development, from *slavery to colonialism and the advent of missionaries* to the *cold war era* and the contemporary *market oriented reforms*.

After gaining their independence in the sixties developing countries had to contend with the interests of the super powers to gain ascendancy in their states during the cold war era. Some of the strategies employed by the USA (and her allies) and the East (USSR) to expand their spheres of influence in poorer countries was to provide development and military aid to these countries (Stoesz *et al.*, 1999). The development aid provided to these countries during this period tended to follow the foreign policy and commercial interest needs of donor countries. Donors focused almost exclusively on disbursing aid through public sector projects.

According to Turner and Hulme (1997) much of the aid that was disbursed tended to impose models that later proved to be inappropriate for the contexts for which they were intended and finally, the billions of dollars that provided technical assistance, mainly for the public sector made very little impact, if any, on the effectiveness of the organisational performance or policy formulation in the receiving countries.

Another characteristic feature of donor aid during this era was the high levels of military and technical assistance by the superpowers to friendly governments for use in the event of internal or external threats. The effect of this was that military budgets were increased to keep in power often corrupt and oppressive leaders – hence the preponderance of military coups in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Todaro & Smith, 2003).

Turner and Hulme (1997) reported that the 1980's saw the emergence of a new set of challenges confronting low and middle income countries. These countries found themselves faced with deepening financial crises with increasing oil prices, rising interest rates and increasing national debt. Many of these countries turned their attention to international financial institutions (IFI's) for resources to keep their economies afloat. They negotiated for loans from the IMF and the World Bank who in turn attached different conditions to the granting of loans. The conditions attached to these loans revolved around the setting of targets for lower levels of public expenditure, reduced government intervention in economic, financial and industrial policy.

According to Todaro and Smith (2003) privatization of state owned enterprises was promoted by major multilateral agencies because it was argued that privatization improves efficiency, lowers costs, increases outputs and curbs the growth of government expenditure. To that effect, between 1980 and 1992 more than 15000 enterprises were privatized throughout the world. The impact of this move in low income countries is however not clear-cut.

The initial structural adjustment programmes focused largely on economic issues with little regard for their impact on the public sector and social welfare considerations. Rao (2000) reports that a study that was commissioned by the World Bank in the mid nineties found that poor funding of social services and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources increased income inequalities which often led to social disruptions.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the status of Russia as a superpower diminished considerably. This also marked the end of the cold war and the emergence of a new international order that is characterized by capitalism as an economic system and democracy as a form of governance. To that extent, capitalism and democracy had no other competing ideologies to contend with, and therefore gained ascendancy and dominance in world affairs.

2.16.2.2 Globalisation and its implications for Governance and accountability

International organisations collectively form the nucleus of world government because they are in practice, the instruments of coalitions of nations and corporations. These organisations, he asserts, make decisions that impact on the material conditions (lives) of people globally and the people who are affected by these decisions are not necessarily involved. Hay, Lister and Marsh (2006) also contend that economic globalization and other factors have helped increase the interconnectedness between states and as a consequence, states are increasingly influenced by events and decisions made beyond their territorial reach.

The Washington Consensus (Comprising IMF, World Bank, US Congress, US Treasury and various think tanks) for instance agreed on the need for fiscal discipline, redirection of public expenditure towards health, education, infrastructure, tax reform, unified, competitive exchange rates, property rights, deregulation, trade liberalization, privatization and promoting foreign direct investment (Ahrens, 2002; Hayami & Godo, 2005). The implications of these decisions had far reaching consequences not only for the USA, but elsewhere as well.

The dominance of international organisations in world affairs was necessitated by growing poverty and the inability of governments, particularly in developing countries to promote human development and reduce poverty. The inability of most governments to meet the basic needs of their citizens tended to weaken the accountability relationships as discussed under paragraph 2.8. It is generally accepted that good governance has the

potential to facilitate service delivery, particularly to the poor who depend largely on the public sector for services.

According to Ahrens (2002), the World Bank is credited with giving the notion of good governance a prominent role on the economic development agenda when it specifically attributed the crisis in Sub Saharan Africa in 1989 to governance problems. The Bank identified widespread corruption, excessive personalization of political power, human rights abuses and the lack of democratic rule as being impediments to sustained development.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also committed itself to promoting good governance in member states. In its *Partnership for Sustainable Global Growth*, the Fund aimed to promote policies and develop institutions and administrative systems that do not provide opportunity for bribery, corruption and fraudulent activity in the management of public resources. The Fund also undertook to work together with the World Bank and other multilateral institutions to promote good governance and enhance public sector accountability in recipient countries.

Poverty in developing nations manifest itself in different ways: low income, illiteracy, ill health, gender inequality and environmental degradation (World Bank, 2004b). It is against this background that the international community committed itself in a series of meetings held in Monterrey, Doha and Johannesburg to greater resource transfers by developed countries and better policies and institutions in developing countries. It was in these meetings that the following eight millennium development goals, that were to be reached by 2015, were agreed to:

- The eradication of poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health

- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop global partnerships for development (World Bank, 2004b).

According to the World Development Report (World Bank, 2004b) making services work for the poor involves changing not only service delivery arrangements, but also public sector institutions. Services that have more direct relationship with human development include basic health and education, water, sanitation, energy and transport which are the responsibility of the state.

Governments use a variety of ways to deliver these services: central provisioning, privatizing, NGO involvement, decentralisation to local governments and community participation. Many governments are according to this report still failing to provide the poor with these services. Failures and successes in service delivery point to the need to strengthen accountability in key relationships in the delivery chain between the poor and the providers, the policy makers and providers and between policy makers and providers. Foreign aid donors should reinforce accountability in these relationships and not undermine it.

A discussion on how international institutions and other actors impact on and influence the nature of public administration and policy making processes on nation states will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.16.2.3 The Notion of Global Governance and its impact on Nation States

According to Sorenson (2006), politics is increasingly taking the shape of international or global governance and national governments no longer rule within well defined territorial borders. According to him, global governance is a term that refers to the regulation and control of activities taking place at local, regional and global levels.

Governance is thus an international, trans-governmental and trans-national activity that includes not only government or units of government and traditional international organisations, but also non-governmental organisations and other non-state actors.

Kooiman (2006) maintains that governance of and in modern societies is a mix of all kinds of governing efforts by all manner of social-political actors, public as well as private. He contends that governing issues generally are not just public or private, they are frequently shared and governing activity at all levels, from local to supranational is becoming diffused over various societal actors whose relationships with each other are constantly changing. According to Hay *et al* (2006), the contemporary relevance of the state has come under attack in the midst of internationalisation, globalization financial integration and capital mobility. They however hold the view that the presence of globalizing forces need not lead to the demise of the nation state. These forces have however altered the context within which states operate, and may also impact on the form and function of the state.

Kooiman (2006) agrees with the above authors and states that government is becoming more facilitative, he prefers to refer to the shifting rather than the shrinking role of the modern state. This shift entails a greater awareness of the need to accept civil society actors as serious governing partners and not only the markets as has been the case previously. He further makes the point that new modes of governance are needed to tackle the diverse, dynamic and complex areas of societal activity and that no single governing agency is able to realize legitimate and effective governing by itself. According to him, governing arrangements will differ from global to local and will vary sector by sector. The challenge facing many states therefore is to make governing interactions/relationships productive. He refers to this approach as the interactive governance perspective.

Another term associated with global governance is global polity. In essence global polity suggests two new developments, according to Sorenson (2006). The first is that governments are enmeshed in a complex network of international organisations to which

they make a variety of commitments, some of which happen to be more binding than previously. Secondly, many non-state actors influence the processes of governance. Regulation and control is therefore no longer the sole preserve of states. Supranational and multi-level governance are taking root. The European Union is a good example. According to Sorenson (2006), the European Court of Justice, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers can make decisions going against single members. Rulings by the European Court take priority over rulings by national courts.

Rosenau (2006) reports that world interdependence has led to the staggering growth in the number of UN member states. This membership has grown from 51 to 184. He also states that the number of non-governmental organisations has equally increased from 17 000 in the mid-1980's to more than 35 000 (with 150 000 foreign subsidiaries) in 1990. It is against this backdrop that Rosenau makes the comment that global governance knows no boundaries: geographic, social, cultural economic or political. He contends that a change in one sphere of life would have rippling effects on other spheres, from within local communities to international levels. This interdependence, he argues, poses serious challenges for global governance because of the growing tendency in the collective capacity to govern. He also observes that in some cases these changes have shifted authority away from the political realm into the economic and social realms.

Sorenson (2006) concurs with Rosenau (2006) and also argues that multilevel governance presents new challenges to democracy in that the core decision makers are not subject to sufficient accountability and control because they do so without a clear democratic mandate. On the other hand he accepts that multilevel governance is good for democracy because it helps bring complex regional and global processes under political control. Some commentators also believe that multilevel governance can advance democracy if they create space for domestic political processes to operate.

The paragraphs above highlighted the fact that global governance is gradually becoming a reality, policy development processes in nation states are consistently impacted upon and influenced by global developments. Consequently, national activities do not happen

in a vacuum. While previously, states accounted largely to their citizens, they are now forced to increasingly account to the broader world community. The growing role of NGO's and related social movements as key governance partners is critical in enhancing accountability in different states. These control mechanisms of global governance are likely to assume even greater influence in the manner in which different states govern their citizenry.

2.17 TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN PROMOTING PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Public sector reform has become critical in recent times. The World Development Report 2004 (World Bank, 2004b) makes the point that governments are necessary to provide basic services like education, health and infrastructure. The report goes further to state that when governments do not function well, they cannot sustain those institutional mechanisms that are necessary for enhancing accountability relationships that yield good services.

The strategies and techniques employed to achieve public sector reform have been classified under the rubric of restructuring. The focus is largely on eliminating red-tape, downsizing, decentralising authority and improving organisational responsiveness to clients needs. The rationale of restructuring is often informed by the need to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency (Turner & Hulme, 1997).

The need to measure and improve performance in the public sector has assumed greater urgency and focus in governments in recent times. The move towards modernising and improving public sector performance over the past two decades was necessitated by several factors, including the following factors identified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004):

- Threats of recession facing many countries particularly the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries

- Mounting demands for more and better public service
- Unwillingness of citizens to pay more higher taxes and diminishing budgets
- Demands for more public accountability

The evolving public sector modernization agenda in many countries is intended to adapt the public sector to better meet the changing needs of modern societies. Emphasis has now shifted away from inputs towards results. Citizens judge governments not by intentions but by results. Consequently governments have now begun to pay closer attention to getting better results from available funds. According to the World Development Report (World Bank, 2004b), the basic functionality of government in three key areas viz: budgets, decentralisation and public administration is critical if basic services are to be delivered to the poor. Governments are therefore to be held accountable in the manner in which they budget and account for services; in the manner they deliver services (decentralisation?) and the overall capacity and capability of public service.

Many governments have embraced performance management as a way of enhancing public service accountability. Governing for performance entails the setting of goals, targets, indicators and measures relating to how service will be delivered and what results are to be achieved. This sets a new trajectory to service delivery where efficiency is more important than complying with the rules. The primary objective of any performance management system is therefore to ensure that employees are held accountable against agreed upon deliverable. To that extend performance contracts are often entered into to specify expected levels of performance on the part of employees.

The complexity of tasks to be performed by governments to meet the customised needs of modern society calls for constant adaptation enhanced efficiency and increased use of private agents. Service quality is also reliant on the credibility of data or information to be used to render that service. To that extent, data quality become critical in meeting increased public pressure for accountability as it enables the government to fulfill its duty to publicly disclose information and take responsibility for its action. In essence, good

governance entails having institutions that support markets, increase access to information, enhance competition, enforce contracts and protect property rights.

2.18 THE PROMOTION OF PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

The performance of governments in delivering services to their citizens has been under sharp public scrutiny over the past two decades. The mounting demand for more and better public services has placed many governments under tremendous pressure to review and revamp their service delivery approaches. Those countries that do not comply run the risk of expulsion from donor organisations and sanctions from world bodies such as the United Nations. For instance, Zimbabwe is currently faced with the prospect of possible expulsion from the IMF, and constant pressure from world organisations and governments due to poor economic performance and poor compliance with the criteria for good governance as stipulated previously in this work. In addition, Zimbabwe failed to pay back its loan since 2001 and as a consequence their Central Bank activities were placed under constant monitoring by the International Monetary Fund (Business Report, 2006).

Many countries have programmes of public sector reform. Almost all governments are committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their administrations to achieve value for money, better quality service, increased productivity and faster delivery (Turner & Hulme, 1997). It could therefore be argued that public sector reform is a response to the call for more accountability in the delivery of public services. As discussed in the previous section, both the World Bank and the IMF focus on promoting good governance with a view to improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector. Public sector reform is important because, as the World Bank (2004b) observed, dysfunctional public institutions limit accountability and can therefore not promote sustainable development.

In some countries, improving performance has involved a whole new vision of the role of the public sector and its relationship to the general public. In this instance the public is viewed as 'customers' and therefore customer satisfaction becomes critical (cf.2.8). In order to meet the varied needs of the public, the World Development Report (2002b) found that for the greatest part governments have built institutions that promote trade and support markets. Overall, these institutions were compliant with the principle of good governance and accountability.

Governments have adopted different strategies and approaches to promote public service accountability. These include accounting and audit-based systems, the use of surveys and other social science tools to assess the impact of policies on individuals and communities. In an effort to meet the varying and complex needs of modern societies, outsourcing and restructuring of public service have become key strategies in promoting the quality of service to be rendered to the general citizenry (World Bank, 2002b).

In order to improve performance as well as accountability to the legislature and the public, some governments (Australia, New Zealand and Netherlands) have embarked on extensive public sector reforms. These reforms included the introduction of performance-based management and budgeting to improve efficiency, decision making in the budget process, transparency, accountability and to achieve savings (World Bank, 2002b).

Countries such as England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have gone a step further in promoting a culture of accountability in the delivery of services to their citizens. Through their Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) approach (Blair, 1998), resources are allocated for key priorities, particularly in health and education. The allocation of additional resources to prioritized areas is conditional to ensuring higher delivery standards and the reforms needed to deliver the modern and efficient services that the public needs. To reinforce the notion of efficient public service delivery, Public Service Agreements (PSA's), which set out each department's aims and objectives, targets, resource allocations and timeframes and a statement on how productivity will be

increased have been implemented. In essence, PSA's are about reinventing government by finding new ways to tackle longstanding problems such as fraud prevention and inefficient procurement practices (Blair, 1998).

Given the commitment of the above governments to service delivery, the PSA's are also published to ensure that the citizens understand the type, quality and extent of the services they could expect from government departments and their related agencies. The publishing of the PSA's is, according to the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, an important step to improving democracy and accountability.

From the preceding paragraphs, it goes without saying that good governance provides opportunities for increased participation by those affected in the decision making processes, it strengthens the capacity of governments to meet the needs of their respective societies and thereby enhancing their quality of life. It is also evident from the examples given above that those countries that embrace the principles of good governance tend to enjoy greater political stability and economic prosperity.

2.19 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

2.19.1 Introduction

Young (2001) points out that all countries, regardless of their history or stage of development, have to contend with forces of globalization. It is the international institutions and organisations that, in the main, shape the policies of many countries, developing and developed (cf.2.9.2.2). Again, different countries react differently to global forces and influences (cf.2.11) According to Ahrens (2002) and Evans (1995; 2006) different kinds of state structures create different capacities for action. Structures define the range of roles that the state is capable of playing. The effectiveness and consequence of public policies in turn depend on the institutional capacity of the state and how well the government is prepared to resist the pressure of vested interests. Governments are to match their roles to actual capacity and capability.

The South African nation is a nation that is still forming, having emerged from decades of institutionalized racial discrimination, colonial and apartheid rule. South Africa became a constitutional democracy in April 1994. The immediate and pressing challenges confronting the fledging democratic state were varied and manifold (Republic of South Africa, 2003; South African Department of Basic Education, 2010a). Key among those was to dismantle the divisive apartheid structures in all spheres of life and to usher in a new order of a united nation committed to a shared vision. Admittedly, education was seen as the foundation from which a new social order was to emerge. In order to appreciate the complex context within which the transformation of the South African society had to occur, the following characteristics of the inherited apartheid state display some of the features of a weak state (cf 2.2.2.6) and therefore a poor compliance with the notion of good governance (cf. 2.5.3).

- Exclusion of the majority of society from full participation in all aspects of the South African life
- Inequitable distribution of resources along racial lines
- Economic isolation through sanctions leading to the country's inability to become globally competitive.
- And Consequently, economic growth was stunted
- Exclusion of the country from all multilateral institutions whilst the public sector debt was on the rise.
- Poor human rights record and a low regard for the rule of law or constitutionality

The authoritarian nature of the state meant that it became more isolated and more corrupt. By the late 1980's the country was becoming ungovernable with the economy failing rapidly.

The democratic government had to confront the above challenges whilst at the same time facing new ones of integrating the country into a rapidly changing global environment.

The following section will focus on how the democratic South Africa repositioned herself to respond to global imperatives of good governance and accountability.

2.19.2 South Africa and the Notion of a Developmental State

The post 1994 democratic dispensation presented the newly formed South African government with a variety of challenges on many fronts. The most pressing and immediate challenges revolved around the need to actualize the 1996 democratic Constitution in the context of a rapidly changing global environment (cf.2.9.2.2). In effect, the government had to pursue its national agenda of reconstruction and development within the dictates of globalization.

The notions of global governance and global polity as discussed earlier (cf. 2.9.2.3) have implications for the way the South African state approached its transformational agenda. Authors such as Sorenson (2006), Kooiman (2006) and Hay, Lister and Marsh (2006) have reported on the impact of globalization on nation states. They emphasised the fact that nation states no longer rule within defined territorial borders and that governance in modern societies is a mix of all kinds of governing efforts of different social/ political actors, private and public and that governance happen at all levels – from local to supra-national.

South Africa can be regarded as a developmental state because it displays, to varying degrees, some of the following characteristics that were discussed under par.2.2.2.6. For the purpose of this section, these characteristic (Johnson, 1999) will be repeated here:

- Commitment to growth and development and the development of appropriate policies
- Fighting institutionalised corruption
- Create political stability
- Sets national goals and standards that are internationally oriented and in keeping with international norms and conventions

- Insulates its bureaucracy from direct political influence so that it can function technocratically. It calls for enhanced capabilities and capacities of its bureaucrats
- Uphold the rule of law (Weil, 2005).

Some of the above characteristics will be applied to the South African situation in the following paragraphs:

2.19.3 DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.19.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The dawn of democracy in South Africa heralded a new culture and approach to service delivery (cf. 2.2.2.2). Implicit in this new culture is the acknowledgement that public service must be re-engineered to meet the imperatives of an emerging developmental state like South Africa (cf. 2.10). Accountability and responsiveness have become central organising principles for service delivery in any democratic state.

In responding to the challenges highlighted under section 2.12.1 above, an appropriate institutional and legislative framework had to be developed. According to the Ten Year Review Report (Republic of South Africa, 2003), South Africa has, since 1994, engaged in a process of extensive legislative review to eliminate the vestiges of the apartheid society and to create a new democratic order.

The 1996 Constitution created the framework for the nature, focus and content of the South African democratic state (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). The following section will highlight critical areas of intervention that were intended to reposition the country to respond to its developmental mandate. The necessary legislation and policies will also be quoted in relation to the identified area of intervention.

2.19.3.2 Legislative Framework Governing the Public sector

Beyond assuming power in 1994 the newly formed democratic government had to redefine the role of the state and its relationship with the society in general (cf. 2.8) With the adoption of the new Constitution in 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), the South African government committed itself to the continuous improvement of the lives of its citizens through a transformed public service that is representative, coherent, efficient, accountable and responsive to the needs of all.

The establishment of the *Department of Public Service and Administration* (DPSA) is seen as a response to the constitutional imperatives of an accountable and responsive public service (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2004). To give practical effect to its mandate of transforming and modernising public service, the DPSA operates within the following enabling legislation to promote good governance and accountability (cf.2.5.3) among others:

- **The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 1995) and the 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997).**

The two White Papers mentioned above form the bedrock of service delivery efforts by the government. Batho Pele literally means ‘putting people first.’ The Batho Pele White Paper (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997) provides a framework to get public servants to be service oriented and for the general public to hold public servant accountable for the type of service they provide. This White Paper, which is commonly referred to as the Batho Pele White Paper provides a framework to get public servants to be service oriented and for the general public to hold public servants accountable for the type of service they provide. There are eight principles that form the bedrock of the Batho Pele initiative to promote a people centred approach to service delivery. These are consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information,

openness and transparency, redress and value for money (cf 2.5-2.7). The Batho Pele policy remains the government's most important campaign to change the heart and soul of public service in South Africa (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2006).

- **Public Service Act no. 103 of 1994 (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 1994) and Public Service Regulations of 2001 (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001b)**

This Act and its Regulations were formulated to give effect to the Constitutional principles. Its main purpose is to provide for the organization and administration of the public service as well as the regulation of conditions of employment and other related matters. This act support the notion of a developmental state as described earlier in this chapter (cf.2.2.2.6).

- **Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (AJA) Act no. 3 of 2000 (South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2000b)**

The purpose of this Act is to promote and to give effect to the Bill of Rights as enshrined in the Constitution. It gives every citizen the right to take action against the state if they believe that their rights are infringed upon. This Act also provides for access to information held by the state in order to take action against the state. In essence, the AJA promotes efficient administration, good governance and creates a culture of accountability, openness and transparency in public administration (cf.2.5.3).

2.19.4 THE BATHOPELE REVITALISATION STRATEGY

In order to entrench the values of Batho Pele among public servants, the Batho Pele Revitalisation Strategy (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001a) was launched in 2001. This strategy is anchored on four pillars: The first pillar aims at improving the back office operations of government by improving the systems,

work processes, and institutional structures which promote and enhance service delivery. The second pillar relates to the improvement of front office operations which involves the actual interface between public service ('the face') and the general public. The third pillar focuses on the improvement of internal communication to build a strong organisational culture anchored on customer service, a strong sense of belonging and the instilling of a sense of pride in serving the public out there. The last pillar is focused on external communication that entails a two way communication of understanding the needs of end users and providing them with the necessary information and feedback (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001a).

Beyond the creation of policies, systems and procedures, the next level of intervention was to change civil service demography and orientation to enhance service delivery and the overall performance of the state. Since the Department of Public Service and Administration (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 2001b) is tasked with the responsibility of driving public service reform, it prioritized the following interventions:

2.19.5 RESTRUCTURING OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

In an effort to transform the public sector (cf. 2.10) in line with the vision of the Constitution, the South African government set out to rationalise and integrate the historically fragmented public service. Some of the key focus areas included the matching existing skills with job requirements, the retraining of staff to meet the needs of citizens more effectively, changing the profile of public service to make it more representative as well as introducing the Senior Management Service (SMS) to attract and retain skilled personnel in the public service.

According to Abedian (2007) human resource development and the reconfiguring of the machinery of the state i.e. the public sector and its institutional capability, are long term drivers of growth and have to be prioritized if South Africa is to improve her competitiveness globally.

Despite the efforts made above, the challenges confronting public service reform in South Africa remain daunting. An overview of the current situation on the 1.3 million employees of the state reveals the following disturbing characteristics according to Levin (1999):

- Low skill levels among public servants which often lead to poor spending and thus denying communities the critical services they need.
- High staff turn-over and vacancy rates averaging 40 % in some departments and 20 % in others. Staff turns over places serious limitations on service delivery.
- Poor implementation of performance management systems overall.
- An acute lack of skilled specialists. The skills audits conducted by departments indicated that 90 % of skills required are for high skill posts, for example; engineers, legal experts and experienced senior managers. Unfortunately, this category of skills is highly marketable and also in short supply in the private sector.
- Government salaries remain uncompetitive when compared to the private sector.

The net effect of the lack of certain key skills in the public sector, particularly in the financial sector, and at senior management level, is that finances are badly managed in departments. The reports released by the Auditor General indicate that most government departments perform poorly in financial management partly because of poor financial management skills.

Concerns have also been raised about the capacity of the South African public service to meet the imperatives of a developing state given its generally poor accountability culture (Bernstein, 1999; Swilling & Wooldridge, 1998). However, the need to balance transformational goals with technical efficiency in public service has been widely acknowledged and recognized by government as a key challenge to service delivery (Ndletyana, 2000; South African Department of Basic Education, 2010a). In this sense, it could be argued that the capacity and capability of the South African public service falls

short of meeting one of the key requirements of a developmental state as stipulated by Johnson (1999) earlier on.

Through the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI), the Department of Public Service and Administration (South African Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997) aims to bring innovative strategies to enhance service delivery in the public sector. One of the CPSI projects is focusing on the elimination of red tape in the public service. The red tape reform initiative assumes greater importance in this country because some studies have suggested that red tape in public service is not only costly (equivalent of 4% of a nation's GDP) but it also impedes the government's intentions to address its developmental imperatives (Future Watch, 2004). A survey on the impact of red tape on business expansion revealed that constraints that were brought about by red tape are not only experienced in South Africa, but also a major concern internationally, particularly in Europe (Mokopanele, 2006). It is apparent from the above discussion that service delivery and accountability are inextricably linked.

In an attempt to confront service delivery challenges in the public sector, the then Minister of Public Service and Administration (SabinetLaw, 2007) initiated a process of establishing a Single Public Service with a view to:

- Improve service delivery at local government
- Enhance the quality of management and leadership
- Promote integrated service delivery and do away with fragmentation.
- Decentralise government services for the convenience of the citizens

In effect, a Single Public Service, according to the Minister, sought to allow government to deploy its staff to where their skills were most needed in order to achieve a seamless public service that would enhance the delivery of services to people who need them most. Corruption has been identified as an impediment to service delivery. The following section addresses itself to the legislation that is intended to curb corruption.

2.19.5.1 Legislation aimed at Fighting Corruption to Promote Growth and Development

It has been previously mentioned in this work that corruption retards progress and that is the reason why funding organization like the World Bank and the IMF have committed themselves to fighting corruption in all member states. In the context of South Africa, the following legislation has been promulgated to fight corruption.

2.19.5.2 Public Finance Management Act no.1 of 1999 (PFMA) (South African Department of National Treasury, 1999)

This Act was released in 1996 the express view to ensure that public resources are managed effectively. The Public Finance Management Act (South African Department of National Treasury, 1999) was aimed at ensuring that public resources were effectively distributed and utilized to the benefit of all. This Act also stipulates reporting requirement for all government departments and all public entities. According to Temkin (2008), it is now compulsory for departments and public entities to include performance information in their annual reports. In addition, this performance information must also be reviewed by the auditor general and be reported on in his report. It is expected that information on the performance of an organ of state would lead to improvements in its operations and by implication enhance service delivery and promote accountability.

In an attempt to grow the economy so that the basic needs of the citizens could be met, the GEAR policy was developed as explained below:

2.19.5.3 The Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR)

The Growth Employment and Redistribution Policy (GEAR) (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) is aimed at achieving sustained growth through a competitive outward oriented economy as well as create a favourable climate for economic and private sector activity. Economic growth was to be achieved by instituting a tighter fiscus control, restructuring

of public service and budgetary reforms. Both the PFMA and the GEAR policy documents ensured that there is transparency and stability in macro economic policies to promote sustainable growth (cf.2.2.2.3).

Beyond the creation of a conducive context for economic growth and sustainable development, the next challenge confronting the government was to introduce policies, institutions and administrative systems that would eliminate opportunities for fraud and corruption both in the private and public sectors.

As early as 1992 the government, on realising the need to curb corrupt practices, passed the following legislation:

In an effort to eradicate corruption in the public sector, an anti-corruption strategy entailing the setting up of a Coordinating Committee and a National Forum was adopted in 2002. In order to bring the country's bribery and corruption laws into line with various international conventions, the: *Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act of 2004* (South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2004). This act is hailed as the most far reaching anti-corruption acts in the world (Business Report, 2006; Hazelhurst, 2007).

The *Public Finance Management Act* (South African Department of National Treasury, 1999), the *Financial Intelligence Act* (South African Department of National Treasury, 2001), and the *Promotion of Access to Information Act* (South African Department of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, 2000a), are in line with international conventions that make bribery and corruption punishable offences.

According to Katzenellenbogen (2006), a survey by the anti-corruption watchdog and lobby group, the *Transparency International Bribe Payers Index*, ranked South African companies as the sixth most likely to bribe to get foreign business alongside India, China, Russia, Turkey, Taiwan, and Malaysia. In countries such as Britain for instance, it is obligatory for every government department to include in their Public Service

Agreements a statement, with appropriate targets, stating the action to be taken to tackle any abuse of the system.

Punt (2006, p. 22) maintains that corruption is endemic from the lowest level of municipal service delivery to the highest echelons of government and enterprise and contends that *'If we do not stem the tide of corruption then the dream of a free prosperous South Africa will fail, and along with her, Africa's hope for a better future'*

The impact of corruption is particularly destructive in the public sector because the public service is a direct receptacle of societal trust, and the abuse of which erodes local and foreign investment in the widest sense. While corruption in the private sector tends to target specific organisations, corruption in the public sector tends to project a negative perception of the country as a whole. This is so because, according to Punt (2006), public service, as opposed to private sector, mostly holds monopolies of basic and essential services like state housing, welfare grants and primary health care. The recipients of these services are often vulnerable and often do not have a choice. While private sector institutions are increasingly scrutinised internally according to world governance standards due to economic globalization, the public sector is still largely protected by national sovereignty. And this, coupled with widespread poverty and the absence of proper oversight and management skill to prevent, detect, and sanction abuses, it leaves citizens with largely defenceless against exploitation

Punt (2006) contends that the following conditions must exist to curb corruption:

- High level commitment from the most senior echelons of government
- Investment in the building of corruption prevention infrastructure
- The implementation and management of such infrastructure with a view to effecting ethical culture change.

2.19.5.4 GLOBAL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the key characteristics of a developmental state as described by Johnson (1999) is the ability of the state to set national norms and standards that are in keeping with international norms and conventions. In confronting the challenges of alienation and isolation from the global community, South African government had to embark on a number of initiatives and projects to gain global recognition and acceptance (cf.2.10). To that effect, the following areas were focused upon:

2.19.5.4.1 International Relations, Peace and Security (IRPS)

Advancing the country's national interests and ensuring national growth and development meant that the transformation and restructuring of all IRPS functions had to be prioritized. The role of security structures before 1994 was geared towards maintaining the apartheid system and was therefore ill-equipped to advance the interests of the new democratically accountable dispensation. Changing their culture and orientation became an imperative for them to gain internal and external legitimacy (Section 2.9.2.2).

South Africa's involvement in initiatives aimed at promoting peace, stability and security in Africa and the rest of the world has been acknowledged and supported by the international community (Annan, 2006). In recognition for her efforts at promoting world peace, South Africa was recently appointed as a non-voting member to the United Nations Security Council. According to Mamoepa (2007), this appointment has enhanced the country's status as an honest broker in the promotion of world peace and security.

2.19.5.4.2 Promoting International Respect for Human Rights and Democracy

Using its own constitution which promotes respect for human rights, democracy and good governance, the South African government has sought to approach human rights issues in

concert with other African states and through multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations and the African Union. It has played a meaningful role in the promotion and protection of human rights globally (Annan, 2006).

2.19.5.4.3 Involvement in the African Continent

South Africa has been instrumental in the disestablishment of the Organisation of African Union (OAU) and creation of the African Union (AU) to better advance the course of the African continent in world affairs. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (2001), which derives its mandate from the AU, has two overarching objectives i.e. to promote good governance practices in all member states and to advocate for the enhancement of Africa's development by ensuring that African countries also enjoy their fair share in the global economy.

According to the chairman of NEPAD (2001), Firminio Mucavele the organization is committed to fighting corruption and to that effect, anti-corruption guidelines have been developed and African countries are expected to ratify these by 2010. This move is intended to assist the process of raising 110 billion dollars over a ten year period to kick start the economic recovery plan for Africa (the Africa Development Plan drafted in 2005). He contends that corruption is one of the chief obstacles to growth on the world's poorest continent (Mangwiro, 2007), cf. 2.8.

To ensure that African governments embrace the principles of good governance and accountability,(cf.2.5.3) the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (2010) was adopted and all member countries are expected to voluntarily subject their policies and practices to external scrutiny. Of the 53 counties in the African Union, 26 have so far signed up for peer review (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2010). South Africa is one of the first four countries to participate in the APRM process. Mkhabela (2006) reports that the review report has highlighted high levels of violent crime, poverty, unemployment, black economic empowerment policies that enrich too few people among others as key challenges that threaten the stability of South Africa's hard won democracy.

Many of the findings in the APRM report support the sentiments often expressed by the media and other independent commentators in general- including opposition parties in the country. The observations made in the ARPM report relating to the progress made by South Africa as a new democracy were also made by the United Nation's Secretary General in his address to the joint sitting of the South African Parliament on 14 March 2006. He commended South Africa's global agenda to promote peace, development, democracy and the general progress the country made to improve the standard of life of its citizens. He went on and made positive comments about the economy, the stable democracy, support for the rule of law and a very progressive constitution (cf. 2.5).

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 to stimulate debate on good governance across the 53 countries that comprise sub-Saharan Africa and to reward achievement in African leadership. The Foundation focuses on five broad areas i.e. safety and security; rule of law on governance, transparency and corruption; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity and human development. South Africa is ranked fifth behind Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana and Cape Verde. In the sub-category of public management South Africa ranked first and 44th in the category of personal safety. According to its founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2010), nothing is more important than good governance. Pitye (2010) also make the point that good governance is a prerequisite for preventing and combating corruption.

The continuing service delivery protests that have dominated the media in South Africa could point to the fact that there is widespread dissatisfaction with poor service delivery in the country, particularly in the local government. These protests have led to the country's president to declare in the State of the Nation address (February 2010) that he will enter into performance contracts with cabinet ministers to hold them accountable for service delivery. According to the Minister in the Presidency, this approach will change how government works and it is anticipated that all Ministers will sign performance contract with the President (Hazelhurst, 2007).

2.19.5.4.4 Upholding the Rule of Law.

Ahrens (2002) asserts that the rule of law refers to laws and policies that provide a regulatory framework for the economy and the society at large. Kooiman (2006) quoted earlier (cf. 2.5.3.2) points out that modern states make laws to regulate many aspects of the lives of their citizens.

Section 165 of the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) guarantees the independence of the Judiciary as follows:

- The judicial authority of the Republic is vested in the courts
- The courts are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law, which they must apply impartially and without fear, favour or prejudice
- No person or organ of state may interfere with the functioning of the courts
- Organs of the state, through legislative and other measures, must assist and protect the courts to ensure the independence, impartiality, dignity, accessibility and effectiveness of the courts

Despite the provisions of the constitution, Pitye (2010) cautions that a corrupt society seeks to neutralize watchdog institutions by ensuring that they never objectively carry out their duties without fear or favour. He further makes the point that such societies have no appreciation for separation of powers or the constitution as the supreme law of the land. They prefer unlimited powers and unquestioning loyalty to government.

The extent to which the government of South Africa upholds the constitution is a matter for debate and does not therefore falls under the purview of this study. The next paragraph gives a brief description of the monitoring and evaluation systems the government put in place to enhance service delivery.

2.19.6 The Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System

A government –wide monitoring and evaluation system was initiated by the Cabinet of South Africa in 2004. Among others, this system provided for the management of programme performance information. Based on the Monitoring and Evaluation System framework, the South African Department of National Treasury (2007) released a *Framework for Managing Programme Performance Information* to further guide departments and local government spheres on to manage and report on programme and performance information. Specifically, this framework aimed to achieve the following goals:

- Clarify definitions and standards for performance information in support of regular audits of such information where appropriate
- Define roles and responsibilities for managing performance information
- Promote accountability and transparency by providing Parliament, provincial legislatures, municipal councils and the public with timely, accessible and accurate performance information (South African Department of National Treasury, 2007).

Performance information plays a growing role in budget allocations and is increasingly being used to monitor service delivery. To that extent, information must be accurate, appropriate and timely. To ensure that public service delivery is as efficient and economical as possible, all government institutions are required to formulate strategic plans, allocate resources to the implementation of those plans and monitor and report the results. Performance information also facilitate effective accountability because it enables legislators, members of the public and other interested parties to track progress in relation to how the government is meeting its delivery targets.

The next section focuses on the notion of accountability as it applies to education provisioning.

2.19.7 ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2.19.7.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous paragraphs, the demand for accountability permeates all sectors of public and private enterprises, education included. In acknowledging that accountability is located within the broad concept of democracy, an examination of how education systems reflect this becomes critical. Thorpe (1985) argues that democracy can only be seen to be working if the community is involved in the running of their schools and if the schools in turn contribute to the well being of the community of which they are a part. The World Bank (2004a; 2004b) also makes the point that education systems must create relationships of accountability between citizens, politicians, policy makers and providers (cf 2.8) with clearly stated objectives and adequate resourcing.

2.19.7.2 Some Perspectives on Education Accountability

Education accountability in the final analysis has to do with ensuring that schools prepare their learners for the global market in the light of the globalizing economy i.e. the products of the schools must not only compete locally, they must have global currency as well. Claasen (2000) makes the point that the impact of globalization on education provisioning is far-reaching. The traditional patterns of education provisioning cannot escape the impact of globalisation. He states that the provision of education globally reflects the following tendencies that have a direct influence on how nation states should respond to the needs of their citizens in a globalizing world:

- Student exchanges
- International oversight and standards councils
- Internationalization of qualifications and branch campuses in foreign countries
- Dramatic growth of distance education
- International research
- School partnerships and multicultural curricula etc. (Claasen, 2000).

Education accountability is essentially about relevance and quality of provisioning. In the final analysis education accountability must be about global competitiveness. Young (2001) points out that global contexts influence and shape education policies in many countries. According to him, pressures for improved performance and for making public services more accountable, and therefore the search for measurable educational outcomes are found to varying degrees in most countries, both developed and developing. He further makes the point that the focus by governments on the economic role of education and its importance on human resource development, has led to increased demand for education accountability.

According to Squelch (2000), education systems worldwide are subject to ongoing change and reform which are occasioned by changes in their societies. A major feature of education reform agendas has always been education governance and especially the decentralisation of education governance to the local school. The devolution of education matters to individual schools is aimed at strengthening the position of parents and to secure accountability through the enhancement of the roles of school governing bodies. Heim (1995) also argues that decentralisation increases accountability.

Some studies (Bottery, 2000; Green, 1999; Levin, 1999) have noted that as a result of the impact of global forces, there is clear evidence of convergence around broad policy themes such as lifelong learning, decentralisation of governance and the growing use of quality control and evaluation measures. However, these researchers warn that the apparent similarities between education reforms in various countries tend to mask deep differences at the level of implementation and practice. They conclude that contextual factors ranging from socio economic to capacity to implement reform must be taken into account at both the system and individual school levels if a better appreciation of the true state of affairs is to be achieved.

According to Guthrie and Schuermann (2010), standards, assessments and accountability, both for school programmes and student performance, have emerged as important levers

for the improvement of education in the United States. This entailed a shift in American education to outcomes based orientation which influenced the perspectives and actions of education practitioners and parents. The two authors however lament the fact that the shift to outcomes based orientation has not fully penetrated the education profession in the United States.

Reeves (2004) on the other hand argues that for accountability to be effective, it must be holistic. In his view, accountability in education is inevitable. He concedes however that the challenge remains how to make this 'slippery' concept effective and fair (cf.2.10). His notion of holistic accountability is based on the principles of accuracy, fairness, relevance, specificity, respect for diversity and clarity. These principles are consistent with those advanced by the Treasury Board of Canada (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002) as discussed under paragraph 2.10 of this work.

The notion of education accountability as it applies in the South African context will be discussed in details at chapter 4 of this study.

2.20 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a working definition of the concept of accountability as well as presenting a rationale for its applicability in the public sector. The inextricable link between accountability and good governance was drawn and the need for good governance as a condition for economic growth and human development explored. The impact of global developments in promoting good governance practices in many countries especially developing ones was also highlighted. A point that has been further illustrated is that the globalization of the world economy puts enormous pressure on national governments to conform to global standards and requirements. To illustrate this point further, examples were drawn from the OECD countries to establish the extent to which they have introduced reforms in their public sectors to meet the changing needs of their societies. It must however be noted that these reforms are still at infancy and their impact in the public sector is not clear-cut. The notion of a developmental state was also

discussed in order to relate its features to the South African situation. Generally, South Africa can be said to be a developmental state since she displays some of the key features of a developmental state.

The latter part of the chapter focused on the efforts made by the democratic South Africa to comply with the requirements for good governance whilst at the same time confronting her own developmental challenges. Despite a myriad of challenges, it is apparent that the South African state has made good strides in ensuring that she complies with the requirements for good governance. South Africa's participation and involvement in global affairs seems to enjoy the endorsement of the United Nations as discerned from the comments made by the then Secretary General of the UN, Annan (2006).

Reference was also made to the APRM as a process and procedure adopted by 26 African countries to continuously subject themselves to an external assessment process to determine their compliance with the culture of good governance in their political, social and economic policies. Since South Africa is one of the 26 countries that voluntarily subjected themselves to the ARPM process, some of the key findings relating to South Africa were also highlighted. The chapter concluded by narrowing the notion of accountability to the education sector.

In a nutshell, this chapter made a case for the need and necessity for accountability in the public sector. The conceptual- theoretical considerations in this chapter provide the starting point and benchmark for the discussion of the empirical investigation on education accountability. The following chapter will explore the notion of accountability as it relates to and applied in education specifically.