

IV. OUR EVENTS



IASIA-MENAPAR JOINT CONFERENCE

Date and Venue: Ramallah (Palestine) from 3 to 7 July

Joint Conference for the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) and the Middle East & North Africa Public Administration Research network (MENAPAR)

In close collaboration with the General Personnel Council (GPC),



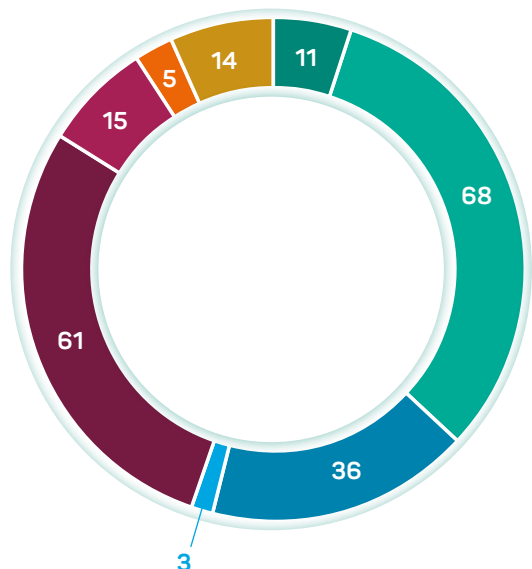
State of Palestine
General Personnel Council



Participation

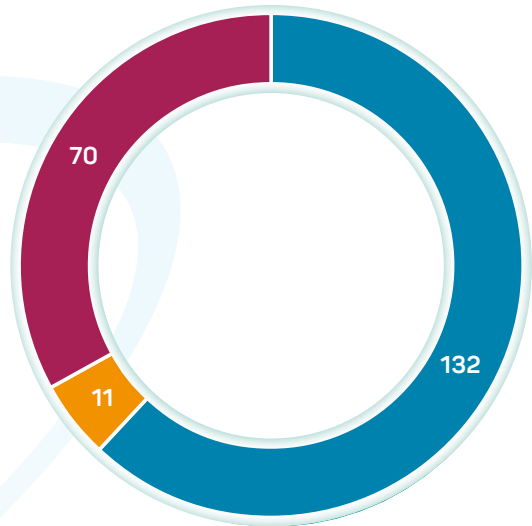
Number of participants registered: 213

PhD's	11
Authors	68
Member of IASIA/MENAPAR	36
Non-members of IASIA	3
Host Country	61
Working Group Chairs	15
BOM Members	5
Staff (IASIA/MENAPAR and local)	14



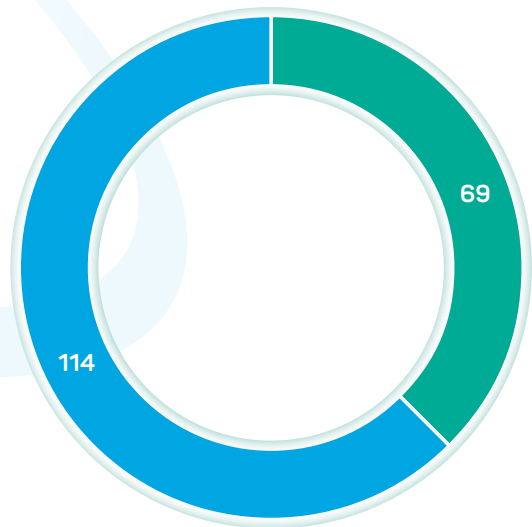
Categories

Academics	132
Students/PhD's	11
Practitioners	70



Gender

Female	69
Male	114



Number of countries represented: 33

- Top 5 of countries
1. PALESTINE
 2. BAHRAIN
 3. CHINA
 4. SOUTH AFRICA
 5. FRANCE





The conference brought together more than 200 academics, practitioners, PhD students and young researchers in public administration and management, as well as contributors from many other disciplines, who tackled various topics in the framework of the IASIA working groups and MENAPAR sub-themes. Particular interest was given to the main conference theme: “Public Administration’s Role in Building and Consolidating Post-conflict States.»

Indeed, recent history has been marked by numerous conflicts around the world. Moreover, it appears that a large number of post-conflict cases face a high risk of relapsing into conflict. Weak and failed states, including most of the post-conflict states, are considered to be a threat to international security and therefore their reconstruction needs to be prioritized. In the majority of these countries, public institutions are totally non-existent or seriously damaged. Therefore, there is a need to reform or totally rebuild them, often from scratch. Moreover, conflict has negative consequences on social and economic welfare, as well as public health care, and is one of the main reasons for the high number of refugees and illegal immigration. Hence, the rebuilding of public administration is a crucial part of the general process of rebuilding and consolidating post-conflict states. In recent times, the notion of international state-building has included international organizations and donors. Together with academic research, they have played an important role in tackling post-conflict challenges and developing related theories. State-building has been driven in different ways, depending on the theory to be applied and the specific country’s context, but so far the results have not been very convincing.

During the numerous sessions of the conference, participants tackled the vital role of public administration in rebuilding and consolidating post-conflict states focusing on different perspectives. In each session, participants shared knowledge and experiences; they brought new ideas regarding the way in which Public Administration could face the challenge of rebuilding states. The evidence gathered in the field indicates that a large percentage of the world population is affected by conflict and post-conflict contexts, and that in almost all continents a conflict is currently taking place or has taken place in the last two decades. Discussants also insisted on the fact that a large number of post-conflict cases face a high risk of relapsing into conflict. Hence, stakeholders involved in post-conflict rebuilding must find answers to crucial questions that concern rebuilding administrations, improving service delivery and people’s lives.

Several points appeared to be common to different working groups’ sessions, plenary sessions and panels. It has been highlighted, inter alia, that there is a need to clarify the terminology used by international donors since countries such as Palestine are still to be considered as going through a conflict. Participants have emphasized the vital role played by international organizations in the process of statebuilding as well as the importance of citizen participation and trust rebuilding. Nevertheless, international organizations are invited to develop common frameworks and networks to improve coordination. It appears that international organizations in post-conflict zones lack feedback from the field staff. Besides, donors should take the context into consideration and therefore be responsive to local needs and aspirations.



It was emphasized that in the aftermath of a conflict, governments must focus in responding to citizens' needs. Hence, international and local stakeholders must rebuild effective, inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions. Political and legal stability, including rule of law and basic human rights, are essential for an effective and efficient public action and administration. Civil servants need clear values, principles and responsibilities. Furthermore, strong and uncorrupted leadership with policies of inclusiveness are necessary in post conflict states to rebuild trust and a cooperative society. Rebuilding social cohesion and trust requires a strong citizen engagement, especially of women and minorities. Hence, the discussants called on governments at central and local level to design and effectively implement policies promoting diversity and equity and fight all forms of discrimination and harassment within the public sector.

It appears that public servants' attitudes are an important factor in improving organizational effectiveness and capacity building. Post-conflict states and developing countries can improve the well-being of public servants and enhance public services' attractiveness by means of simple, low-cost procedures.

During the conference, it has been highlighted that education and training in public administration must play a central role in capacity building in post-conflict states. To improve capacity building and organizational effectiveness, public managers should pay more attention to the role of public servants' attitudes and values. In the vital process of capacity building, national schools of administration and governments must coordinate their efforts. Institutions

delivering education and training must adapt the curricula to the needs of the public sector. It has been proposed to change the curricula in order to teach basic, analytical and political competencies which enable public servants to be innovative, to think independently and critically, to be aware of the relevant practices and to know how to interact in terms of human relations, to work in teams to achieve the objectives.

Experience has proven that "one-size-fits-all" models are not the appropriate solution to post-conflict states. Instead, a model should be built by focusing on the local context and needs. Therefore, priority should be given to the development of a professional and competent public administration. Education and training in public administration must be at the heart of every post-conflict rebuilding strategy.