United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the twenty-second session (27–31 March 2023)

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Committee of Experts on Public Administration

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(27–31 March 2023)**

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Summary

  The Committee of Experts on Public Administration held its twenty-second session at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 to 31 March 2023. The overall theme of the session was "Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises".

  A key message of the Committee was that a cascade of simultaneous crises was undermining the resilience of Governments at all levels as well as their capacity to address the root causes of complex challenges in a holistic and context-sensitive manner. While the ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises was essential, an excessive focus on crisis management might result in the relative neglect of six approaches to policymaking that were central to the delivery of sustainable development: long-term thinking; risk management; use of best available knowledge; stakeholder participation; promotion of collaborative mindsets among public sector workers; and leveraging of public financial management mechanisms to bridge financing gaps.

  Recalling the urgent need to strengthen the global response to climate change, the Committee underscored the need for expanded capacity to access climate finance. It emphasized the need to expand, as a matter of priority, the provision of training and assistance to improve the skills of the Governments of developing countries, and subnational authorities in particular, in analysing data and designing climate projects that could attract investments. It also highlighted the value of linking institution-building and environmental management in the context of peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries.

  Continuing its work on the application of the principles of effective governance and emphasizing that inclusiveness was a cornerstone of sustainable development, the Committee stressed that countries should build on efforts to implement their own models of participation that left no one behind, while strengthening the enabling environment for civic engagement. Turning to governance indicators, the Committee agreed that multidimensional coverage of each of the 11 principles could provide a useful way to enhance policy analysis related to Sustainable Development Goal 16 and that indicators should be detailed enough to capture the quality of a Government's response to the Goals while addressing important analytical gaps in review processes.

  The Committee observed that agile, and data- and insight-driven institutions were necessary in order to improve preparedness and resiliency in managing crises. Building such institutions would depend on access to new skill sets and fostering collaborative, more citizen-centred mindsets among public servants. A review of public sector workforce capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and of related training efforts was seen as being part of the solution.

  To better face multiple crises, it was necessary to strengthen revenue forecasting and planning, and public financial management, while ensuring accountability, transparency and participation in budget processes. It was important to undertake efforts that would improve budget credibility and reduce excessive budget deviations in order to prevent a negative impact on the achievement of the Goals and to ensure that no one was left behind.

  Stimulating public sector innovation through digital technology remained a critical and complex issue, with implications for all parts of government, including operational agencies, regulatory authorities and oversight bodies. The Committee reiterated the need for hybrid approaches to public service delivery that reflected people's needs and aspirations while addressing digital capacity deficits. National

digital strategies could serve efforts to build digital trust, bridge divides and promote respect for human rights online, alongside continuous efforts to anticipate and respond to the impact of technological advances on government and society.

Last, the Committee facilitated a peer exchange among voluntary national review countries (Guyana, Malaysia, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia) and voluntary local review cities (Barcelona, Spain; and Buenos Aires, Argentina) on institutional aspects of Goals 16 and 17. It also held a dedicated consultation with observers.

The Committee concluded its session by adopting a draft resolution and a draft decision for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee also revisited and reaffirmed its contribution to the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twenty-second session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2021/12 of 8 June 2021, 2022/9 of 8 June 2022 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Reaffirming also General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Reaffirming further the outcome document, entitled "New Urban Agenda", adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,[1]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/327 of 14 September 2015, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of freedom, human rights, national sovereignty, good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms, and effective, accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enabling inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development,

Referring to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[2] which entered into force on 14 December 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 77/150 of 14 December 2022, in which the Assembly recognized the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome digital divides, and stressing that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 69/228 of 19 December 2014 on promoting and fostering the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency

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[1] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable, effective and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 77/182 of 14 December 2022 on human resources development,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 74/270 of 2 April 2020, in which the Assembly recognized the unprecedented effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including the severe disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global travel and commerce, and the devastating impact on the livelihood of people, and reaffirmed its full commitment to the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Economic and Social Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the work of the Committee to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twenty-second session,[3] and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises in alignment with the 2023 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

2. *Invites* the Committee to continue to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[4] at the centre of its work and to continue to advise the Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum, and reaffirms that the principle of leaving no one behind should be a core principle of public administration;

Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises

4. *Recognizes* the relevance of whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to sustainable development and leaving no one behind, and encourages Governments to work together in the interest of all countries to strengthen public institutions, in order to stimulate and guide the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and to be better prepared to manage potential economic, social and environmental shocks in the future;

5. *Calls for* increased efforts to support national and international peer exchanges and peer learning on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through cooperation with existing international networks;

6. *Expresses concern* that, while Governments are coping with a cascade of simultaneous crises, this may result in relative neglect of long-term thinking, risk management, use of the best knowledge, stakeholder participation, promotion of collaborative mindsets and use of public financial management mechanisms to bridge financing gaps, and urges Governments to address the complex problems underlying

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[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2023, Supplement No. 24* (E/2023/44).

[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

crises, such as climate change, in a holistic manner, ensuring that crisis management does not crowd out the continuous implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

7. *Recognizes* that achieving sustainable development and strengthening resilience require a long-term perspective in public policymaking, together with institution-building at all levels, based on effective governance for sustainable development, as well as a steadfast commitment to promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, and encourages Governments to integrate reflections of a long-term vision of society into their planning, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals and into their voluntary national reviews of progress towards 2030;

8. *Also recognizes* that accelerating the delivery of the 2030 Agenda at all levels calls for more integrated solutions to achieve the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as a capable State at all levels, and encourages countries to design and implement integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government;

9. *Expresses concern* at the limited capacity to foresee and prepare for the diverse challenges originating from multiple crises in many countries, and calls for a rapid upgrade of the risk management function in government and its integration into Sustainable Development Goal-related coordination mechanisms at the highest level;

10. *Reiterates its concern* that there is an insufficient appreciation of the value of the environment in many countries, and urges Governments to build the capacity of the public sector in natural capital accounting based on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, strengthen the accountability of public institutions with regard to environmental protection by including an assessment of the state of natural resources under their jurisdiction as part of regular performance assessments, and incorporate natural capital valuation methods in public and private sector accounting standards;

11. *Recalls* the need to strengthen the global response to climate change by increasing the ability of countries to adapt to its adverse effects, foster resilience, accelerate the full implementation of all the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, calls for creative approaches to addressing the urgent needs of subnational authorities for expanded access to climate finance, and encourages the relevant international organizations and funding mechanisms to prioritize training and assistance for developing countries to improve their skills in analyzing data and designing climate projects that can attract investments;

12. *Reaffirms* the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and subnational governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and encourages Governments at all levels to apply the principles of effective governance for sustainable development,[5] endorsed by the Council in its resolution 2018/12 of 2 July 2018, to all public institutions and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account different governance structures, national and subnational realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities;

13. *Encourages* the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines and experiences to operationalize the principles at the national and subnational levels, including from sectoral perspectives, and to further engage

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[5] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 24* (E/2018/44), chap. III, sect. B, para. 31.

the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard, in an inclusive manner, together with all relevant stakeholders;

14. *Welcomes* the ongoing initiative of the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union to promote the application of the principles among its member States in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and encourages other regional mechanisms, such as those associated with the United Nations regional commissions, to develop and implement similar initiatives in alignment with their own mandates and processes;

15. *Notes* the renewed efforts of the Committee to associate a set of agreed global Sustainable Development Goal indicators with each of the principles with a view to contributing to strengthening the analytical basis for assessing the impact of reform policies on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;

16. *Encourages* Governments at all levels to enhance efforts to promote the equal and meaningful participation of all stakeholders in matters that directly affect them, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination, and to implement models of participation based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that leave no one behind;

17. *Also encourages* Governments, especially in view of stronger budget pressures, to accelerate action to increase transparency and equal participation in and oversight of the budgeting process, establish transparent public procurement frameworks as a strategic tool to reinforce sustainable development and curb corrupt practices, to strengthen budget credibility and to embed commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals in budgetary and financial processes at the national and subnational levels by adopting practices to monitor and report on the use of public financial resources in support of the Goals, such as reorganizing budgets, based on programmes and activities, and mapping and tracking budgetary contributions to each Goal;

18. *Recognizes* that building resilient institutions calls for more creative, flexible and integrated ways of working that are focused on the needs of people, as well as an adequate stock of competencies, capabilities and resources, and encourages Governments to further promote professionalization of the public sector workforce, invest in digital skills, update competency frameworks for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, address inequalities that exist within the public sector workforce, and take steps to address social inequities in the design and delivery of public services;

19. *Recognizes* that there is a close link between climate change, environmental impacts and conflict, calls for greater attention to underlying environmental issues in peacebuilding and in promoting effective governance for sustainable development in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and looks forward to the Committee's further contribution to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission;

20. *Reiterates* that the COVID-19 pandemic has both accelerated the digital transition and revealed technological weaknesses of public administrations while exacerbating inequalities caused by digital divides, and encourages Governments to manage digitalization of public services in an inclusive, fair, ethical and people-centred manner, while accelerating efforts to bridge digital divides, inter alia, through hybrid models of public service delivery;

21. *Notes* the increasing demands for assistance with operationalization of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and the Committee's emphasis on the need to strengthen the secretariat of the Committee to enable it to respond effectively;

Follow-up

22.   *Requests* the Committee, at its twenty-third session, to be held from 15 to 19 April 2024, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the 2024 session of the Council and the 2024 high-level political forum and to contribute to the review of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals;

23.   *Invites* the Committee to continue to advise on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific contexts and situations of countries differ widely, as well as to advise on making institutions effective, accountable and inclusive;

24.   *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia, in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity-development needs of Member States for building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

25.   *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

26.   *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.

B.   Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

2.   Bearing in mind the theme of the 2024 session of the Economic and Social Council and of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Council review and adopt the following draft decision:

Dates and provisional agenda of the twenty-third session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Economic and Social Council:

(a)   Decides that the twenty-third session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration will be held at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 19 April 2024;

(b)   Approves the provisional agenda of the twenty-third session of the Committee as set out below:

1.   Election of officers.

2.   Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3.   Institutional aspects of the theme of the 2024 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

4.   Peer exchange with voluntary national review countries and voluntary local review cities on experiences and promising practices in implementing Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

5. Institutions, climate action and environment.

6. Principles of effective governance for sustainable development.

7. Public sector workforce matters.

8. Public financial management.

9. Digital government.

10. Institution-building in fragile and conflict-affected areas.

11. Dedicated consultation with observers.

12. Provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee.

13. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-third session.

(c) Decides that documentation in support of the provisional agenda should continue to be prepared through the established working methods of the Committee.

C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

3. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to its contribution to the thematic review of the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises, conveyed to the President of the Council as Chair of the high-level political forum on 1 March 2023. The Committee further examined the 2023 theme from a governance and public administration perspective at its twenty-second session and conveyed a revised input on 6 April 2023.[6]

4. One of the key messages of the Committee was that, while speed and effectiveness were essential in responding to crises, they were not enough to achieve sustainable development. With Governments trying to tackle a cascade of simultaneous crises, crisis governance had become part of a "new normal", resulting in relative neglect in six areas: long-term thinking; risk management; use of the best available knowledge; stakeholder participation; promotion of collaborative mindsets among public sector workers; and leveraging of public financial management mechanisms to bridge financing gaps.

5. In addition, national Governments should empower subnational governments to accelerate the implementation of the Goals. There was much to be gained from multilevel governance in that regard. It was in the interest of national Governments to encourage subnational governments to conduct voluntary local reviews on a regular basis and accelerate action on leaving no one behind by supporting policymaking that took into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination.

6. Since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represented a medium-term framework, and sustainable development required a long-term perspective in public policymaking, countries should be encouraged to integrate into their planning, monitoring and reporting on the Goals a vision of society in 2050 while maintaining a focus on the full implementation of the Goals by 2030.

7. The commitment to strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions to achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals remained highly relevant.

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[6] See https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2023/HLPF%202023%20Inputs%20CEPA.pdf.

Accelerating and deepening institutional integration through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches could bring about systems thinking for transformative changes in governance and public policies. Meeting the challenges of transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world would depend on accelerated efforts to build a capable State at all levels and in all areas of government action relevant to the Goals.

8.   The effective communication and use of reliable data and evidence was critical to promoting a whole-of-society approach to the delivery of sustainable development. A stronger case should be made for the connection between evidence and improved social and economic outcomes while also accounting for how information was communicated and used, for example by translating ideas and evidence into issues that mattered to different segments of society.

9.   The Committee engaged in a peer exchange with four voluntary national review countries (Guyana, Malaysia, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia and Malaysia) and two voluntary local review cities (Barcelona, Spain; and Buenos Aires) with the objective of promoting direct interaction on the institutional aspects of Goals 16 and 17. Each presented concrete experiences for discussion.

10.   The Vice-Chair of the Committee for Development Policy, Arunabha Ghosh, participated in the discussion, sharing the perspective of the Committee of Experts on the need for urgent, faster and more ambitious transformative action to achieve the Goals. Interaction between the two Committees was intended to inform the policy advice provided by the Committee of Experts and jointly contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council system.

11.   Further observations and conclusions pertaining to the 2023 theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development are set out in chapter III of the present report.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Work of the session

12.   The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon nomination by the Secretary-General. The Committee held its twenty-second session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 to 31 March 2023.

13.   The Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, Juwang Zhu, called the session to order. The President of the Council, Lachezara Stoeva, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-agency Affairs, Maria Francesca Spatolisano, made opening remarks. The Committee considered all the items on the agenda of the twenty-second session and concluded by adopting the draft report.

B. Attendance

14.   The following 17 Committee members attended the session in person: Rolf Alter (Germany), Linda Bilmes (United States of America), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Paul Jackson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Aigul Kosherbayeva (Kazakhstan), Ronald U. Mendoza (Philippines), Louis Meuleman (Netherlands (Kingdom of the)), Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon), Juraj Nemec (Slovakia), Alketa Peci (Brazil), Mauricio Rodas (Ecuador), Devon Rowe (Jamaica), Soonae Park (Republic of Korea), Carlos Santiso (France), Sherifa Fouad Sherif (Egypt), Aminata Touré (Senegal) and Najat Zarrouk (Morocco). The following three Committee members participated remotely: Augustin Fosu (Ghana), Henry Sardaryan (Russian Federation) and Lan Xue (China). Three Committee members were unable to participate in the session: Yamini Aiyar (India), Katarina Ott (Croatia) and David Moinina Sengeh (Sierra Leone).

15.   The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the session: International Labour Organization, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and United Nations University.

16.   Observers from governmental, non-governmental and related organizations also attended. Observers were invited to provide written statements in advance of the session. The list of observers who attended the twenty-second session can be viewed on the website of the Committee.

C. Agenda

17.   The agenda of the twenty-second session of the Committee was as follows:

    1.   Election of officers.

    2.   Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

    3.   Institutional aspects of the 2023 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

4. Peer exchange with voluntary national review countries and voluntary local review cities on experiences and promising practices in implementing Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.

5. Institutional mechanisms for providing economic, financial and structural support to address climate change, reduce the use of fossil fuels and protect biodiversity.

6. Application of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Reinventing public sector workforce training and institutional learning towards changing mindsets in the public sector.

8. Public financial management in times of emergency and implications for the credibility of budgets.

9. Stimulating public sector innovation through digital technology and measuring the impact of digital government.

10. Responding to the effects of climate change in institution-building efforts in fragile countries and countries emerging from conflict.

11. Provisional agenda of the twenty-third session of the Committee.

12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-second session.

D. Election of officers

18. The following members served as officers of the Committee during the twenty-second session:

Chair:
> Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa)

Vice-Chairs:
> Louis Meuleman (Netherlands (Kingdom of the))
> Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon)
> Alketa Peci (Brazil)

Rapporteur:
> Rolf Alter (Germany)

Chapter III
Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises

A. Institutional mechanisms for providing economic, financial and structural support to address climate change

Increase the focus on climate adaptation

19.   The Committee discussed institutional mechanisms for providing economic, financial and structural support to address climate change. It noted that climate adaptation funding was lagging behind funding for mitigation due in part to challenges in measuring monetary returns on adaptation investments. Innovative solutions and finance mechanisms were needed to address this gap, at different levels of government and among multiple stakeholders.

20.   Climate funds, multilateral development banks and other lenders could focus more on adaptation, which might include funding more grants, providing loan-loss reserves and designing mitigation-adaptation hybrid projects. Regional mechanisms could also support financing for climate adaptation, including through supporting the mobilization of national resources and new fiscal mechanisms. Tools such as debt-for-climate swaps and a levy on voluntary carbon market transactions could be used to mobilize funds. Institutional barriers that limited the implementation of policy measures which did not require significant investments, such as green public procurement, could be removed.

21   The needs of developing countries with limited resources and fiscal space, which contributed little to climate change, but often had to spend significant resources to manage its effects, should be taken into account. Women, young people and vulnerable groups, who were among those particularly affected by climate change, should be supported by Governments and empowered in the context of climate action, including by providing social protection and rapid (emergency) disbursement mechanisms. Existing climate funds should support community-based responses and initiatives with a focus on gender and/or youth.

Enhance the role of public-private partnerships

22.   A global solution to address climate change included a call for expanding both public and private resources. Governments should improve legal frameworks for public-private partnerships at all levels, enabling concessional and other structures and engaging with non-profit partners to minimize risks and tap into a broader pool of private funds. They also needed to establish transparency and administrative capacity to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of public-private partnerships. International organizations could support the development of benchmarking and the identification of good practices of public-private partnerships related to climate action.

23.   Strategies and instruments to attract more private finance needed to be explored, in particular to reduce investment risks and improve data availability. Private investors should be incentivized to use longer-term and multifactor-informed investment strategies, and encouraged to explore innovative financial mechanisms, such as green, blue and mini bonds, that could be deployed at scale and further integrated. The availability of better data could also help engage the insurance sector.

Strengthen the use of natural capital accounting

24.   Governments should reform their economic statistics and accounting systems to embrace natural capital accounting to measure the contribution of ecosystem assets and services to the economy in physical and/or monetary terms. This effort would also enable Governments to quantify the benefits of climate projects in a way that made them more attractive to donors. The standardization of measurements, expanded use of digital technologies and sharing of lessons learned could help natural capital accounting to gain more traction. Natural capital accounting should also be advanced in cities, subnational governments and the private sector.

Facilitate access of cities and subnational governments to climate finance

25.   The Committee suggested reviewing the current international financial architecture to better reflect the prominent role of subnational governments in climate action. It also suggested that to allow cities and subnational governments to access climate funding, barriers, such as political and institutional factors, data and capacity constraints and donor requirements, could be addressed. Multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions should be encouraged to prioritize adaptation projects, increase their lending to subnational governments and deploy funds in an expedited and flexible manner.

26.   At the same time, cities and other subnational governments could benefit from having sufficient funds and the capabilities to transform ideas into bankable projects, update policy frameworks, embed climate change in urban planning, develop climate finance plans and investment strategies aligned with national climate policies, and improve financial stability and performance.

27.   To further facilitate access to climate finance, the accreditation of subnational entities to existing funds could be facilitated and submission requirements streamlined. The creation of a fund for global urban resilience and a development bank for green cities, connected to the loss and damage fund, could also be considered.

28.   Donor countries should meet their full pledge commitments, including funding for the implementation of new loan or grant requirements, and using fair accounting practices. The appointment of an inspector general for climate agreements could be considered to promote transparency and predictability, ensure that funding commitments were met and conduct audits of major transfers.

Increase local and national capacities for securing climate finance

29.   The United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and other international organizations could helpfully prioritize training and assistance for developing countries to improve their skills in analysing data and designing climate projects that could attract investments, outlining and minimizing project-specific and financial risks, managing trade-offs and fostering inclusivity. Such support should also be expanded to city and other subnational government officials, in particular in developing countries.

30.   There was an opportunity to incorporate climate finance into existing capacity development programmes and curricula for public servants. National associations of subnational and local governments could play an important role in providing capacity-building and organizing peer learning activities.

31.   Multilevel governance mechanisms for data collection and sharing could ensure that municipal governments had access to information that enabled them to make

decisions based on climate-smart decisions regarding urban management and development.

Multistakeholder collaboration for more integrated solutions

32.   Sustainable development and successful climate action required an integrated and coherent approach and shared responsibilities among stakeholders, based on transparency and accountability. Cities should therefore also avoid a siloed approach and address the social, environmental and economic aspects of sustainable development in an inclusive manner.

33.   To ensure their effective engagement, local governments should be empowered and their institutional roles and responsibilities for climate action clearly defined. Multi-stakeholder collaboration could also be helpful to meeting the cost of financing a green transformation.

B.   Application of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Promoting the principle of participation

34.   The Committee observed that public participation was a cornerstone of effective governance for sustainable development and intrinsic to the common vision of the 2030 Agenda. Countries should build their own models of public participation that left no one behind, paying particular attention to women, young people and vulnerable groups whose voices might not otherwise be heard in policy processes, even when their interests were directly affected.

35.   Governments should adopt whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, encompassing a truly multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance system that puts people at the centre of development. They should create an enabling environment for participation, by protecting the right of participation and civic space. Political will and the means of implementation were some of the main elements of creating such an enabling environment.

Institutionalizing participation in government administration

36.   The means of engagement were too often devised in response to an immediate or specific need or to meet ad hoc requirements despite decades of study and experience, including on the part of operational agencies supporting national development objectives in the field. While recognizing that new opportunities had emerged, especially in the digital realm, there was nonetheless a wealth of knowledge to draw on from all development contexts. The co-production of services with citizens as partners rather than subjects, participatory budgeting and gender budgeting were some examples of well-developed practice areas (see also chap. III. D).

37.   The setting up of normative and institutional arrangements was seen as vital to strengthening the quality of participation, both offline and online, as well as to fostering the legitimacy of public policy based on the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders and to promoting accountability for meaningful participation on the part of government officials. This effort could enhance ownership of the Goals and support effective implementation, monitoring and review at all levels. The Committee noted that the absence of participation also came at a cost, for example, in the rejection of the outcomes of expert reviews that did not involve stakeholders even if the same conclusions had been reached in another forum through an inclusive process.

38. A change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours on the part of public officials, who might be reluctant to widen the use and scope of participatory processes, was a crucial step that called for attention by Governments.

39. Having Governments give and receive feedback on participatory exercises undertaken or planned could help to promote trust and engagement. Such an effort could also help Governments ensure that public participation mechanisms, processes and tools, including digital platforms, were well designed, implemented and monitored. The specific capacity-building needs of subnational authorities needed to be considered, given the ambitions set out in the 2030 Agenda and the persistent difficulties associated with limited administrative capacity at the local level. The relative inattention paid to stakeholder engagement in voluntary local review reports was seen as a possible concern in the localization of the Goals.

Strengthening the enabling environment for participation

40. Governments should urgently address challenges that hamper the implementation of public participation, including a lack of public trust in government, a limited understanding of individual rights and civic duty, and a limited capacity of civil society actors to monitor policy implementation, while taking into account the national context.

41. A holistic approach should be taken, and public servants and non-State actors at all levels should be empowered and trained through education and capacity-building measures, including the provision of adequate training to increase their awareness of their rights, duties and obligations, which could strengthen their sense of belonging and ownership. It was noted that, given their proximity to citizens, subnational governments were well-positioned to benefit from participation strategies. It was also noted that civil society organizations might choose to strengthen their own participatory approaches and would not wait to be invited to voice their concerns.

Indicators of effective governance for sustainable development

42. The Committee noted that, despite some progress in monitoring and measuring progress on the Goals, data gaps continued to be a major obstacle in follow-up and review processes, for example due to missing time series, timeliness, data granularity and incomplete coverage by countries. In addition, the Committee indicated that some procedures to generate data from qualitative indicators were not statistically relevant.

43. Even if some of the main data gaps in the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals indicator framework were addressed, the framework would still be deficient when it came to assessing the quality of governance and its impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Most of the indicators referred to policy objectives rather than to how to achieve them.

Indicators for priority-setting

44. In addressing these difficulties, a distinction could be made between indicators for priority-setting and indicators for analytical purposes. A handful of top-level indicators were often the most valuable for priority-setting, for example if choices had to be made between investing in roads or schools. A focus on human rights would be paramount in decision-making of this kind.

45. The Committee also noted that governance indices encapsulating diverse targets, instruments and institutional set-ups were sometimes used by decision-makers but could be criticized for their complexity, lack of methodological transparency and exclusion of qualitative assessments.

Indicators for policy analysis

46.   With respect to indicators for policy analysis, the Committee underscored that despite the causal relationship between the governance aspects of Goals 16 and 17 and the achievement of all the Goals, policy indicators were often preferred to governance indicators.

47.   Analyses of the interconnections between elements of effective governance and all the Goals could feasibly be undertaken through multilayered network analyses supported by artificial intelligence. An important step would be to precisely define indicators that reflected the governance principles, drawing on the work of entities that were active in that area. The elaboration of an agreed methodology for indicator 17.14.1 of the Goals, on policy coherence for sustainable development reflected recent progress along these lines.

A way forward

48.   The Committee agreed that indicators that provided comprehensive coverage of the principles would provide a useful starting point for future work. Indicators should be detailed enough to capture the quality of a Government's response to the Goals at the national and subnational levels and address analytical gaps in review processes, while speaking to the way in which different dimensions of institution-building might reinforce or undermine each other in a range of national contexts.

49.   Voluntary national reviews were only one part of the review architecture of the Goals. The governance principles and indicators could be addressed as a common thread linking the implementation of all the Goals both within and outside of formal review processes. The processes included related discussion of voluntary national reviews on the margins of the high-level political forum, thematic reviews of the Goals at the high-level political forum, regional-level review mechanisms and national processes of review beyond the voluntary national reviews.

50.   Going forward, further collaboration with, for example, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the United Nations Development would be essential to ensuring relevance and legitimacy. The Committee underscored that, in many respects, the ongoing initiative of the African Peer Review Mechanism to promote the application of the principles among its member States in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat continued to be highly productive. Other regional mechanisms, such as those associated with the regional commissions, could be encouraged to develop and implement similar initiatives in alignment with their own mandates and processes.

C.   Reinventing public sector workforce training and institutional learning towards changing mindsets in the public sector

51.   The Committee noted that agile, and data- and insight-driven public institutions were necessary in order to improve preparedness and resiliency in managing current and future crises. Such institutions relied on a new set of skills and a democratic and citizen-centred mindset among public servants, including elected officials and political appointees.

52.   A holistic approach to change the mindsets of public servants and political leaders to align them with the principles and values of the 2030 Agenda and the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development should be made a priority. This would also help to emphasize the culture, ethics and values that underpinned the role of public servants.

Need for systematic review of public sector capacity-building efforts

53.   Shortages of capacity and skills among public servants, including elected officials and political appointees, were among the key shortcomings hampering public sector efforts in support of the achievement of the Goals. However, the outsourcing of core activities of the public sector to external actors should only take place in areas where efficiency gains could be attained, without risking accountability and other objectives.

54.   Public sector capacity-building efforts should be systematically and comprehensively reviewed, especially in countries in which public service delivery remained ineffective. Particular attention needed to be paid to technology adaptation, access and entitlement to training, prescribed courses, course accreditation, the relationship of the provided training and education to policies, and the procedures for job grading, remuneration, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal and promotion.

55.   Building strong institutions through training should be based on the detailed assessment, analysis and prioritization of individual and institutional needs. The analysis of institutional needs should focus on service delivery improvements, the need for rationalized and cost-effective structures and institution-building, and the promotion of greater internal and external accountability. The assessment of individual needs should facilitate a system of personal development plans for all employees and identify appropriate forms of staff development. Training programmes should be designed to be gender sensitive and inclusive.

56.   The long-term outcomes of effective training should include a change in behaviour and an improvement in work performance of public servants, which in turn could result in a mindset change at all levels. Public-sector training and education might incur high costs, and the resources used had to be justified and monitored. The use of specific criteria and key performance indicators was recommended. In addition, trainings should be assessed for their impact, with the goal being to promote higher impact training and drive stronger return on investments. Structural and systemic measures should accompany training to ensure the retention and impact of learning.

57.   To ensure effective training and capacity-building strategies, appropriate and sustainable resource allocation would be needed, including at the subnational level, as well as the adaptation of good practices from around the world.

Skills of public servants and behavioural insights

58.   Public servants, including elected officials and political appointees, would need to develop new skills and competencies to engage more effectively in the digital era. The digital divide should be kept in mind when developing training that relied on technology to ensure that no one was left behind.

59.   The spread of misinformation and disinformation, the proliferation of digital platforms and the growing political polarization demanded an active response from the public servants involved in drafting public communication strategies aimed at informing and inspiring citizens to take positive actions in the pursuit of more democratic, sustainable and green societies. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the crucial role of inclusive communication in bridging ethnically and linguistically diverse groups and digital literacy gaps between generations and urban and rural populations. The pandemic also showed that the strategic use of behavioural insights could be effective in encouraging compliance and policy uptake, particularly in highly decentralized governance settings.

60. In the face of multiple crises, the urgent transformation of public institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world demanded a public sector workforce capable of fostering resilience. The workforce could be created through policymakers developing strategic foresight skills, giving a more prominent role to leaders and public servants willing to challenge the system and innovate from within by redefining the rules and making them strategically better (referred to as bureaucratic hackers) and increasing the use of more innovative policymaking tools that go beyond top-down approaches.

Engagement of young people

61. The challenges and needs of young people, who were particularly affected by the multiple crises, should be taken into account and their involvement in policymaking and public institutions increased as their engagement would be key to achieving the Goals and driving systemic reforms over the longer run. The administrative capacities of the public sector could be reinforced with regard to delivering youth-centred services, collecting evidence to track inequalities faced by young people, informing decision-making and embedding the principle of intergenerational equity in rule making, public spending decision-making and stakeholder consultations. Different approaches could be used for the meaningful participation of young people such as in edutainment and gamification.

62. Given the lack of awareness of the role public servants and lack of trust in the public the role and value of the public sector workforce was to be promoted and some of its successes showcased to attract and retain young public servants at all levels, including at the local and subnational level. Efforts should also be made to ensure that young people were supported throughout their careers to balance out their (digital) skills and their lack of experience.

D. Public financial management in times of emergency and implications for the credibility of budgets

Budgeting for implementation of the Goals and for emergencies

63. The Committee noted that the lack of progress in achieving the Goals called for a reprioritization of their integration into national budget processes, with provisions also needing to be made in budgets for emergency expenditures. In order to more effectively meet the challenges of multiple ongoing crises, it was necessary for revenue forecasting and planning, and public financial management to be strengthened, while ensuring accountability, transparency and public participation.

64. Since public expenditure had a significant impact on the achievement of the Goals and on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, countries should design budgetary allocations accordingly and execute budgets according to plan. Emergency transfers to cushion the social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and untargeted social subsidies should at this point be scaled back or dismantled.

Budget coordination and capacity-building

65. Mechanisms to ensure budget coordination between different entities and across different levels of government should be established for emergency situations to help increase budgetary efficiency, respect for national fiscal rules and alignment with the achievement of the Goals.

66. Institutional flexibility in the budget architecture of countries should be improved, including through further integration of risk management capacity throughout the budget cycle. Contingent liabilities should be assessed beyond their

financial impact. Efforts to institutionalize risk- and emergency-based budgeting processes should be undertaken in line with the principles of transparency and participation.

67. Functional classifications needed to be incorporated into all budgetary documents to enable comparisons, by sector, between allocations and actions executed, and administrative classifications needed to be incorporated to facilitate the tracking of public expenditures, especially at the subnational level of government.

68. To improve public financial management, technical capacity as well as financial and budget literacy should be enhanced. Various steps could be undertaken to build the capacity of public officials with regard to fiscal transparency, including by furthering their understanding of the role of different stakeholders and political economy issues.

Budget credibility

69. Budget credibility was related to the principles of effective governance. The lack of budget credibility already present in many countries had been further exacerbated owing to recent crises. Budget deviations needed to be analysed to understand their causes and identify which sectors were most deprived of funding as to prevent a negative impact on the achievement of the Goals and ensure that no one was left behind.

70. While crises could prompt unplanned spending and budgetary changes, it was important for Governments to openly provide legislative bodies and citizens with explanations regarding deviations in the budget and information on planned measures to bring spending back in line with approved budgets and to rectify previous underspending. Civil society should be involved in discussions on budget credibility and in the identification of solutions to ensure inclusion and acceptance.

71. Some countries had been making progress with regard to budget credibility by, for example, enhancing core public financial management processes according to existing international standards; protecting core expenditures; and improving the downstream part of the budget process, including reporting, accounting, and auditing.

72. The forthcoming handbook on how supreme audit institutions could shed light on budget credibility, to be published jointly by the International Budget Partnership and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, could help to guide supreme audit institutions in becoming more engaged in budget credibility issues.

Data to inform budget decisions

73. Reliable, transparent and comprehensive data should inform difficult budget decisions and were seen as critical to better understanding budget deviations. Data collected to inform indicator 16.6.1 of the Goals should be used for measuring budget credibility and for raising awareness of the impact of budget deviations on specific sectors and groups, and the need for well-targeted and sustainable budgetary resources for the achievement of the Goals.

74. It was noted, however, that many government reports still did not include enough details and disaggregated information. An appropriate legal framework was needed to enhance the quality and availability of information. Data could also be leveraged by civil society to monitor the budget process and ensure accountability.

Digitalization and public financial management

75.   Digital innovations in government and the development of critical digital public infrastructure should be fostered, such as fiscal identification, data governance in public financial management and the expanded use of digital payments. Digital tools could also help to enhance the identification of fiscal risks. Ambitious investments in the digitalization of the public sector, particularly at the subnational level, should be better managed and monitored to ensure budget credibility (see also chap. III.E).

Development aid

76.   International donors and multilateral institutions were encouraged to deliver their finance commitments in a timely and transparent manner, including by providing not only loans but also grants based on actual needs and by considering the costs of operation and maintenance over the long term.

77.   Recipient countries should assess their needs and plan realistically, and strengthen their budget capacity and financial preparedness so that they could manage the funds received in a transparent and accountable way, produce a consolidated and centralized debt management plan and develop performance metrics. In times of crisis, they should strengthen their response planning before the crisis deepens.

E.   Stimulating public sector innovation through digital technology and measuring the impact of digital government

Hybrid approaches to public service delivery

78.   The Committee reiterated that the COVID-19 pandemic had further accelerated the digitalization of the public sector. At the same time, the pandemic had also underscored the merits of achieving a harmonious balance between virtual and in-person public service delivery and political communication.

79.   In view of rapidly emerging technology trends and associated risks, digital technology regulations and policies should be reviewed, revised or developed. It was important to develop fit-for-purpose regulation, balancing between full and self-regulation, incentives and punishments and other forms of smart regulation. One consideration was to adopt a life cycle approach to regulating technologies. It was also noted that there was no one-size-fits-all approach.

Addressing digital capacity deficits

80.   There was a wide range of digital capacity deficits among public servants and political leaders. While they did not need to be experts in digital technologies, it was important for them to have an understanding of the related opportunities and risks for effective policymaking. The regulatory capacity of the public sector was to be expanded to ensure optimal use of new technologies. At the same time, it would be helpful to dismantle institutional silos and barriers that hampered the use of existing digital skills in the public sector workforce. Digital brain drain remained a concern, especially in middle- and low-income countries.

81.   The Committee recommended building public digital literacy across all age groups, including young people. School curricula should offer courses not on gaining not only know-how about digital technology but also an understanding of the technology and its direct and indirect impacts, including with regard to ethics and human rights. Schools of public administration and government training institutes were well positioned to support continuous digital learning.

Review of national digital strategies and end-to-end technologies

82. National digital strategies should take a holistic and integrated approach, focusing on concrete results, closing digital divides and enhancing lives and well-being. They should be fit-for-purpose and balance opportunities and risks, reinforcing a people-centric approach and respect for human rights. It was necessary to further consultations and engagement with the public in order to understand its wishes and needs regarding digital public service delivery.

83. National digital strategies should be aimed at fostering the development and purchase of domestic technologies and software products that could make States more digitally empowered. The development of end-to-end technologies should be supported, and their deployment accelerated, given their impact on structural changes in the economy, the creation of new industries and businesses and the development of technologically advanced and the innovative information and communications technology production and services. Digital public goods and infrastructure could foster digital inclusion, including though last mile approaches reaching the most vulnerable.

84. Effective digital service delivery was affected by the availability and effective management of datasets, including data on and for the Goals. The Committee stressed that the transfer and sharing of technologies among countries, especially between developed and developing countries, should be accelerated.

Regulation of cryptocurrencies

85. Adequate regulation of cryptocurrencies was important, considering the related opportunities and risks. Efforts undertaken by countries in this regard should be enhanced. Increasing the security of information systems and communications networks in public institutions remained a vital task. In that regard decreasing the risk of leaks and the misuse of citizens' personal information and data should remain a priority.

Building digital trust, bridging divides and respecting human rights

86. In the context of leaving no one behind, there was an urgent need to bridge digital divides and ensure digital access and meaningful connectivity, especially for those experiencing digital poverty and those in developing countries and underserved, remote areas and regions (rural-urban divides). It was necessary to address the challenges arising from circumstances such as Internet shutdowns, lack of freedom of information and lack of affordable access to digital devices and content.

87. While some public services would go digital, it was crucial for public service delivery to remain grounded in humanity and ethical standards. Laws and digital rights, such as the right of consent and the right to be forgotten, could be used to protect and safeguard fundamental human rights.

88. To retain public trust, Governments should inform citizens about the benefits and functioning of digital technologies. There was, for example, a need to explain the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector. The rapid advance of artificial intelligence called for regulation and greater analysis of its impacts, especially with regard to unintended consequences and privacy matters, drawing on the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other entities dealing with issues related to ethics and the use of artificial intelligence. The worrisome trend of misinformation, disinformation, hate speech and fake news needed to be addressed. Furthermore, preventing the misuse of technologies by Governments (e.g. through censorship and surveillance) and non-government actors (e.g. data fraud and cybertheft) was critically important to protecting people.

F. Responding to the effects of climate change in institution-building efforts in fragile countries and countries emerging from conflict

Issues in environmental peacebuilding

89. The Committee noted that there was a close link between climate change, environmental impacts and conflict. Fragile and conflict-affected countries were particularly affected by the impacts of climate change, such as increased natural disasters and sea level rise, which amplified already existing drivers of conflict, such as extreme poverty and lack of access to basic services. Four potential pathways increased the risk of conflict as a direct result of climate change: livelihoods; migration; behaviour of armed groups; and exploitation by political elites. The consequences of climate change and the risks of conflict depended on local context and interacted with factors on the ground, resulting in unpredictable outcomes.

90. Many conflicts were driven or sustained by, or in some cases even resulted in, environmental degradation and, as such, conflict resolution and long-term sustainable development required a form of environmental peacebuilding. The role of local, traditional and informal institutions in managing natural resources and contributing to environmental peacebuilding needed to be recognized.

Approaches to environmental peacebuilding

91. The Committee observed that there were three fundamental approaches to environmental peacebuilding based on: security; livelihoods; and politics. The security approach was focused on the potential of environmental cooperation to reduce conflict over natural resources and increase stability; the livelihoods approach was focused on the potential of environmental cooperation to improve the well-being of communities affected by conflict; and the politics approach was focused on the potential of environmental cooperation to build trust and understanding between different parties.

92. Strong institutions and effective governance underpinned physical security, economic well-being and cooperative social relations and supported political stability and public trust. Conflicting narratives that did not reflect the realities on the ground should be avoided to prevent the further fuelling of conflicts.

Strengthening environmental peacebuilding

93. The Committee suggested enhancing policy approaches to environmental peacebuilding through:

(a) Better analysis of underlying causes and mechanisms that would allow countries experiencing climate change and an increased risk of conflict to improve their programming and reporting and thereby mitigate risks more effectively. Having information that was more accurate might also help countries to differentiate between the short- and long-term goals of institutional peacebuilding efforts and support evidence-based climate action;

(b) Coordinated thinking on policy through an environmental peacebuilding approach that encompassed the entire socioecological system as well as challenges that transect traditional governance boundaries, such as local and national boundaries. Transparency and accountability were to be increased, and the private sector and other actors were to be more involved in climate action and environmental peacebuilding efforts in order to strengthen cohesion and trust. It was also noted that picking a tangible issue to which different groups could relate could be useful in peacebuilding situations;

(c)   Adoption of a climate-sensitive lens through which to recognize that climate change impacts and natural resource issues were at the core of conflicts and that efforts to tackle these challenges were a means of addressing underlying injustice. At the same time, the root causes of conflict should be identified and investments in conflict prevention increased to minimize the risk of future conflicts;

(d)   Greater weight being given in environmental peacebuilding efforts to the needs and challenges of groups most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and conflict, such as women, young people and trapped populations (those willing to move but unable to do so). Governments should prevent injustice, ensure respect for human rights and strengthen environmental rule of law;

(e)   Enhanced international environmental collaboration and support, given the ongoing climate crisis, including through increased engagement within the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. A special focus should be on capacity-building and supporting projects that promote climate resilience and adaptation, especially in developing countries. That approach could also offer enhanced opportunities for engagement with regional and subregional organizations to help developing countries better cope with the transnational effects of climate change. There was also a need for better collaboration across United Nations entities to ensure adequate and effective support for countries;

(f)   Strengthened efforts to apply the principles of effective governance for sustainable development as they were particularly important in cases of government failure or countries in conflict. Application of the principles could help to mitigate the long-term effects of climate change and reduce the risks of serious conflict arising from its environmental impacts.

Chapter IV
Future work of the Committee

94.   The Committee will continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Economic and Social Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the deliberations of the Council and assisting it in the performance of its functions. At its twenty-third session, the Committee will work on the theme that was adopted for the 2024 session of the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development and prepare policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of that issue. The Committee will again invite countries and cities to present their voluntary national and local reviews, respectively, and share their experiences and views on promising practices in implementing Goals 16 and 17, taking into account interlinkages with all the Goals.

95.   The Committee reaffirmed that the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Council in in its resolution 2018/12, continued to provide a useful cross-cutting and interconnected framework for its work. Subnational perspectives could also become a cross-cutting component of the Committee's future policy analysis. Similarly, in preparation for and during the next session, the Committee could consider pursuing interdisciplinary approaches to the items on its agenda. Its analysis of problems, to the extent possible, could be accompanied by actionable advice on policy solutions.

96.   The Committee decided to continue the practice of organizing informal intersessional working groups to prepare the groundwork for its next session, bearing in mind the need to produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations to inform efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 72/305.

97.   The ongoing contribution of observers was welcomed. Further attention could be given to ways of further improving interaction with observers, for example through expanded member engagement with academic networks and communities of practice on specific agenda items during the intersessional period.

98.   The Committee decided to keep its methods of work under review and looked forward to continuing engagement with the Committee for Development Policy and other subsidiary bodies of the Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations processes, as appropriate, with a view to promoting linkages and informing the integrated view of the Council.

Annex

List of documents

Agenda item	Title or description
2	Annotated provisional agenda (E/C.16/2023/1)
3	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises (E/C.16/2023/2)
3	Contribution by the Committee to the 2023 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
5	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on public institutions and support for climate funding (E/C.16/2023/3)
6	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on promoting the governance principle of participation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2023/4)
6	Conference room paper on knowing better where countries stand on their way to 2030
6	Conference room paper on the use of governance indicators in voluntary national review and voluntary local review processes and what it may mean for building strong institutions for the Sustainable Development Goals
7	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on reinventing public sector workforce training and institutional learning towards changing mindsets (E/C.16/2023/5)
8	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on public financial management in times of emergency and implications for the credibility of budgets (E/C.16/2023/6)
9	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on digitalization and public sector innovation (E/C.16/2023/7)
10	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building strong institutions to link the environment and peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries (E/C.16/2023/8)

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