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Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 2 July 2018

[on the recommendation of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration
(E/2018/44)]

2018/12. Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions [2016/26](#) of 27 July 2016 and [2017/23](#) of 7 July 2017 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,

¹ General Assembly resolution [71/256](#), annex.



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

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/200 of 20 December 2017, 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 the 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 of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

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 seventeenth session,³ and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on readying institutions and policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁴ including on implications for public institutions of strategies for integrated action to achieve sustainable and resilient societies in accordance with the 2018 themes 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 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;

Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

4. *Recognizes* the critical role of institutions in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, calls for institutions to develop more creative, flexible and integrated ways of working to this end, and notes that implementing the Goals does not necessarily require the creation of new institutions;

5. *Reiterates* the importance of the sectoral ministries in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas, taking into account the interrelationships inherent in the Sustainable Development Goals, underscores that it may be useful to invite such ministries to identify the Goals and targets that they will address most specifically and adjust or develop related implementation plans or strategies in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, and recognizes the role of ministries of finance in enabling and accelerating the implementation of the Goals;

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

³ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 24 (E/2018/44)*.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

6. *Notes* that, in order to achieve greater policy and institutional coherence, various approaches will be needed, such as integration, coordination, alignment, multilevel governance, compatibility, reconciliation, capacity-building, empowerment and public sector reform, and that civil society and the private sector are crucial partners in this endeavour;

7. *Recognizes* that promoting coherence requires using tools and mechanisms from hierarchical, network and market styles of governance in ways that are both compatible with national and organizational contexts and as innovative as possible;

8. *Invites* Governments and other organizations to stimulate peer-to-peer coaching and learning so as to promote policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals, inter alia, by establishing a global network of practitioners responsible for promoting coherence at the national and subnational levels, and to include policy and institutional coherence in the curricula of public administration schools and other training institutions;

9. *Notes* that adequate analytical, operational and political capacity are all needed in public institutions to achieve policy coherence, and that policy and institutional coherence could be embedded in performance management systems of the public sector;

Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development

10. *Reaffirms* the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and endorses the principles of effective governance for sustainable development contained in the report of the Committee as an initial reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals;

11. *Encourages* the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, following a well-defined process for assessing the relevance of a practice to the principles and the evidence of impact, including from sectoral perspectives, and to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard;

Effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources

12. *Recognizes* the essential role of governments and public institutions at all levels, and all other relevant stakeholders, in effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda through appropriate laws, policies and strategies;

13. *Also recognizes* that fiscal sustainability and proper public financial management are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the sustainability of public finance does not depend on the sum of government expenditure or the size of the State but on the structure and efficacy of the public sector;

14. *Notes* that trust-building has an integral place in budgeting processes and in promoting an effective legal and regulatory framework and a monitoring and accountability framework with participation, engagement and risk management, and that participatory budgeting at the local level, in particular, can help to build public trust and facilitate social cohesion;

15. *Also notes* that the increased transparency and enhanced openness of public data related to both revenues and expenditure allocation have resulted in better-informed citizens and increased awareness of how the contribution of taxes is

beneficial to society, and encourages governments at all levels to publish public financial data in a timely and comprehensive manner, including through open government data;

16. *Notes with concern* the prevalence of ineffective tax systems, tax evasion, profit shifting, treaty abuse and illicit financial flows, and encourages Governments to strengthen efforts to promote efficient and fair tax systems, inter alia, by improving the management of tax collection processes through the use of information and communications technology, data analytics and artificial intelligence;

17. *Stresses* the critical role of the audit function in public financial management, and encourages governments at all levels to strengthen related capacity-building and to enhance the use of tools such as cost accounting and performance audit in public financial management;

Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants

18. *Stresses* that leadership at all levels of government and public administration is critical for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomes the fact that, in some countries, the highest level of government has engaged or remains engaged in the implementation of the Goals;

19. *Invites* Governments to launch initiatives to raise the awareness and commitment of civil servants at all levels to the 2030 Agenda and encourages them to take leadership roles, innovate and break away from business as usual, inter alia, to address the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also invites Governments to build the capacities and skills of civil servants in areas such as integrated and coherent policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, consultation, evidence-based reviews of progress, the collection and use of statistics and data and engagement with non-State actors;

20. *Stresses* the need to provide adequate investment in training in all countries, particularly in developing countries, to expand access to skills that can boost public sector capacity and productivity and to attract people with those skill sets to the public sector workforce, particularly given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement as well as the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets;

21. *Recognizes* that the use of new technologies and the promotion of innovation in the public sector should be accompanied by regulatory frameworks that can guide Governments and reduce the risk of adverse effects of technology and innovation;

22. *Encourages* Governments to ensure respect for the rule of law, professional integrity and effective and fair human resources management;

Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress

23. *Underscores* that there is no single blueprint for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and that identifying the most effective policies in a given context requires the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, inter alia, local authorities, civil society and the private sector, on various policy options;

24. *Invites* Member States, therefore, to ensure that policies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals are developed in a participatory, inclusive and collaborative fashion, noting that it is important to institutionalize participation and engagement so as to ensure that various parts of civil society have an opportunity to make their voices heard, and recognizes the particular challenges that governments at all levels may face in this regard in fragile and conflict-affected settings;

25. *Underscores* that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals requires the actions of not only Governments but also multiple actors of civil society and the private sector and the launching of effective partnerships, inter alia, in monitoring implementation;

26. *Stresses* that awareness and ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals by institutions at all levels and by society at large are essential to promoting their implementation, and invites Governments to undertake concerted efforts to raise awareness and increase ownership of the Goals within national, regional and local authorities, civil society, the private sector and society at large;

Strengthening whistle-blower protection

27. *Encourages* governments at all levels to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice through, inter alia, public education, as well as standardized procedures and guidance, building on the findings of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the exchange of good practices in corruption prevention, including on whistle-blowing systems and procedures;

Enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities

28. *Stresses* that the transformation of societies in urban and rural communities is characterized by growing urban populations and an increase in the number of migrants, youth and older persons in many areas, and urges governments at all levels to consider the impact of demographic changes on urban governance, municipal finance and local finance systems, local capacity for the prevention of, adaptation to and the mitigation of external shocks and the capacity of local authorities to ensure access for all people to public services;

29. *Emphasizes* that, regardless of the model or the extent of decentralization in a country, both the central and local governments have a responsibility for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it is critical that they work together in a spirit of collaboration and partnership;

30. *Affirms* that the resources and capacities of local governments should be commensurate with their responsibilities, and therefore notes that responsibility for the implementation of specific Sustainable Development Goals and targets should be transferred to the local level, accompanied by an adequate level of financial resources and capacity development;

31. *Recognizes* the transformative power of information and communications technology, and welcomes the fact that Governments are increasingly using such technology to deliver public services and other functions and engage people in decision-making, while noting that many forms of the digital divide remain;

Follow-up

32. *Requests* the Committee, at its eighteenth session, to be held from 8 to 12 April 2019, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the 2019 session of the Council;

33. *Invites* the Committee to contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum and to work towards contributing to the overall review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be conducted by the high-level political forum in 2019, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals;

34. *Also invites* the Committee to continue to advise on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements being established 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, inclusive and accountable;

35. *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;

36. *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;

37. *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.

*41st plenary meeting
2 July 2018*