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23rd SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

**Draft Opening Remarks
by**

Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, UN DESA

**Monday, 15 April 2024, 10:15 am
Conference Room 1, Conference Building (CB)**

Madame Chairperson,

Distinguished members of the Committee,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Li Junhua, I have the honor to welcome you to the 23rd session of Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) both here in the conference room and those joining us in the virtual world.

Let me join Ambassador Narvaez in congratulating the newly elected Bureau and thank all members of the Committee for their unwavering commitment to CEPA's work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2030 Agenda is off track or in reversal. It is due to wide ranging causes starting from climate change, rising inequality, disruptive technological changes, lack of financing and

outdated governance arrangements. We need to rethink our governance systems. It is heartening to know that over the course of this 23rd session, the Committee will be exploring new governance insights to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, especially eradication of poverty. The idea of “new insights” builds on the growing need to deal with issues such as regulating and reforming markets and financial sector, the insurance industry to combat climate change; artificial intelligence governance, rising income and wealth inequality. We also need new insights on and promoting sound public financial management in fragile and conflict-affected settings. We need to rethink our policy frameworks and public governance arrangements so that they can deal with competing demands of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the rapidly changing context.

Most of the challenges that I have outlined cannot be handled with the current “short termism.” It is time to change our mindset. I hope that these “new insights” will give us practical tools to propel countries towards a longer-term vision for people and planet. At the same time, the new insights will build on the past work of the Committee.

Your programme of work for the week clearly reflects that you will build on your work by covering issues such as climate action and environment, public sector workforce matters, public financial management and digital government.

You will also continue your foundational study of the UN principles of effective governance for sustainable development. As early as 2016, CEPA recognized, and ECOSOC affirmed, that leaving no one behind should be a core principle of public administration. Persistent poverty and growing inequalities suggest that progress has been insufficient. There has even been some regression.

The work of the Committee is putting in place practical approaches, tools, and solutions for building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions to advance on the pledge of leaving no one behind. I commend the Committee for its efforts to advance this overarching goal.

In your assessment of institutions, climate action and environment, you will consider governance issues pertaining to the regulation and reform of the insurance industry. It is a highly technical and challenging subject with very real implications as large catastrophic losses grow owing to more frequent and severe climate-related weather events – and protection shrinks. Government as a facilitator, regulator and sometime insurance provider is a critical player. The fundamental questions to ask is Are the relevant institutions up to the task? We are looking forward to your answer to this question.

The Committee is also planning to expand the scope of its deliberations on public sector workforce issues, public financial management and digital government. In discussing digital government, the focus is on the governance of artificial intelligence and its use in the public sector. It is critical to keep these central public administration functions on the agenda. The rapidly changing world of work, finance and technology will continue to have profound implications for government at all levels. Your insights will help ECOSOC stay ahead of the curve by providing up-to-date policy guidance to member States on these issues.

Lastly, you will examine the role that public financial management plays in fragile and conflict-affected areas. As we know, conflicts have a devastating impact on poverty eradication efforts. Good practices in public financial management can foster equitable resource allocation. Improving delivery of basic services, especially in areas being left behind, can help strengthen livelihoods, contribute to pro-poor policies, and blunt the drivers of conflict.

I wish you success in your deliberations and look forward to the continued engagement of all members and observers with the work of CEPA.
