

23rd Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Written statement by Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration Inc. (EROPA)

Agenda item 7: Public Sector Workforce Matters – Insights into Public Sector Workforce Governance to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals

Human capital has been one of the core foundations of development and growth among nations and institutions. Likewise, within the context of governance, the public sector workforce has been, indeed, the backbone for efficient and effective public service delivery, especially among vulnerable groups. Therefore, it is very vital for the government to put emphasis and importance on capacity development and upskilling of the public sector workforce. This has been reaffirmed in the *2024 Regional Human Development Report Making Our Future: New Directions for Human Development in Asia and the Pacific* of the United Nations Development Programme where it highlighted the need to invest in capacities and capabilities enhancement in order to maintain the competitiveness, innovativeness, and preparedness of the workforce in the evolving work landscape.

As part of the efforts for continuous capacity building in the public sector, covering both the national and sub-national levels, the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA), together with its State Members and Institutional Members, has been implementing various capacity development training for government officials and staff focusing on innovation, public service delivery enhancement, leadership, and e-governance, among others. Some of the institutions that are actively providing this assistance in the Asia-Pacific region include the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science, the Local Autonomy College of Japan, the National Human Resource Development Institute of South Korea, the National Institute of Development Administration of Thailand, the National Institute of Public Administration of Indonesia, Public Service Department of Malaysia, and Civil Service Commission and Local Government Academy of the Philippines, among others. The National Academy of Public Administration of Viet Nam, one of the EROPA State Members, likewise heads the Public Sector Training Institutions (PSTI) of the Southeast Asian region – a consortium of PSTIs in the region that mainstreams best practices and innovations in the public sector workforce.

Central to the capacity-building interventions is the need to change the mindsets of public servants and the people. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs publication on changing mindsets (2021) underscored the need to change mindsets to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hence, it is imperative to maximize the Curriculum on Governance SDG toolkits of the United Nations Department of Social Affairs and the United Nations Public Administration Network particularly the modules on “Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and “Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery.” Moreover, it is

important to create cohorts of trainers from public training institutions and academe to utilize these toolkits and integrate the SDGs in the curricula and training design.

It is also recommended to maximize digitalization efforts and online platforms in order to further increase the productivity of the public sector workforce as well as government efficiency and effectiveness. With the emergence of digital nomads and digitalization efforts of governments, it is also suggested to maximize the assistance of private sector as well as development partners such as the Chandler Institute of Governance, United Nations Development Programme, particularly the Astana Civil Service Hub, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), e.g., the Urban Connect Activity – a five-year project dedicated to assist nine secondary cities in the Philippines to achieve local economic development and enhanced public service delivery through digital efforts, among others. May we also mention that EROPA helped organize the panel of Ministers during the World Governments Summit held in Dubai last February and the concerns of digitalization, the use of AI in governance, and the ever-pressing challenges of the digital divide at the international, national, and local levels. These concerns must continue to be addressed by the CEPA, especially within the context of improving the public sector workforce.

Capacity development of the public sector workforce, especially at the local and sub-national governments, is key since they are the government's frontliners on the ground. Training interventions from the national governments and development partners can also be complemented by the linkage with the academe or the concept of *town and gown*, where the *town*, i.e., sub-national governments, collaborate with the *gown*, i.e., academe, for the public and in this context for the capacity development and upskilling of the workforce.

In order to sustain all of these efforts towards upskilling and developing the capacities and capabilities of the workforce, it is imperative to embed the culture of learning where monitoring and evaluation are mainstreamed among the government agencies, programs, and personnel toward our collective objective of improving public sector workforce governance to advance the SDGs