



633 Third Avenue, Suite 3210, New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel.: (212) 371-2559, 371-2832 (ext. 101); Fax: (212) 371-2784, (646) 738-6143

**Remarks by H.E. Ulvi Mehdiyev
Chairman of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations
under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

at the “Peer exchange with voluntary national review countries and voluntary local review cities on experiences and promising practices in implementing SDGs 16 and 17”

18 April 2024

*Distinguished Members of the Committee,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great honor and pleasure to be speaking before you in today’s CEPA session. Before proceeding any further, I would like to take a moment to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the CEPA Committee for affording us this invaluable opportunity to convene and engage in the upcoming discussions.

As we gather here today, it is imperative that we acknowledge the urgency of our collective efforts as we approach the year 2030. The milestones set forth in the 2030 Agenda compel us to accelerate our progress toward sustainable development, especially in light of the SDGs demanding our undivided attention. In this regard, SDGs 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) emerge as the most crucial of the bunch, as they not only convey the essence of a prosperous and equitable society but also underscore the collaboration required to overcome the many challenges facing our global community. Here, we must highlight the importance of cultivating a public workforce capable of spearheading our progress even further.

Our commitment to delivering transparent and effective public services must be driven by the goal of ensuring equitable access for all members of society. However, achieving this goal goes beyond the simple enactment of legislation; it demands the adoption of innovative approaches that can help us better engage with citizens and cultivate a capable public workforce. Such capacity development nurtures a culture of ongoing enhancement, enabling public servants to navigate changing demands and actively pursue ways to improve service provision.

Today, we are representing the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations, operating under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was established in 2012 to enhance public service efficiency and promote a culture of innovation in the country. Through our "ASAN Service" centers, we provide citizens with a single point of access to over 400 services offered by 15 public and 30 private institutions, thereby simplifying bureaucratic processes. By making

service delivery more transparent, accountable, and efficient, "ASAN Service" represents Azerbaijan's comprehensive effort to modernize the public sector and strengthen the country's public sector workforce.

"ASAN Service" is more than just a means of providing public services. It represents the Government of Azerbaijan's elaborate approach in attaining SDG 16. Given its mission to maximize citizen satisfaction, the model manifests through its many innovative solutions aimed at eliminating bureaucratic hurdles traditionally associated with public services to render them effective and accessible. At the same time, we prioritize the capacity development of public servants, which manifests in numerous training opportunities offered to them through our ASAN Innovative Development Center. The idea is to ensure that our employees have the necessary capacity to interact and assist our citizens, while at the same time being the exemplars of effective citizenship. As a result, we have employees that possess the capability not only to contribute to the institutional achievements but also facilitate the accomplishment of other SDGs such as the 9th (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 11th (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12th (Responsible Consumption and Production), and 15th (Life on Land).

Lastly, it is crucial to recognize the international dimension of the public workforce, rather than solely focusing on a national perspective. Over the past decade, the State Agency has fostered strong ties with numerous countries and international organizations, resulting in the signing of more than 20 memoranda of understanding. These partnerships facilitate the exchange of experiences among institutions, enabling an environment for mutual growth and continuous learning. This collaborative approach is particularly significant given the global nature of the SDGs. By engaging in experience-sharing dialogues, public servants, regardless of their location, can contribute to accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs on a global scale. This therefore underscores the importance of engaging the public workforce, which is fundamental to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Presently, we are embarking on similar endeavors with the Government of Romania. This month, we had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Mircea Abrudean, the Secretary-General of the Government, during his official visit to Azerbaijan. After demonstrating the operations of "ASAN Service" and productive discussions, we agreed to formalize our collaboration through the signing of a memorandum. This will, in turn, allow us to capitalize on each other's experiences and lay the groundwork for an environment conducive to our mutual growth.

By investing in the growth of our public sector workforce, we are contributing to the broader agenda of sustainable development. Our commitment to building a skilled and empowered public sector workforce is integral to realizing the SDGs, as it enables us to bridge the gap between government and citizens, ensure equitable access to services, and promote peace, justice, and strong institutions. Furthermore, by embracing collaboration and fostering partnerships on an international scale, we can leverage shared experiences and accelerate progress toward achieving the SDGs globally. It is through these concerted efforts that we can truly make a lasting impact on our societies and build a better future for generations to come.

Thank you.