

Views on agenda item 9: Leveraging key advances in building strong institutions and governance for climate action, focusing on clean energy transition

Rosemarie Casimiro, PhD

College of Public Administration and Disaster Management, NEUST, Philippines

24th session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

April 9, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on the pressing issue of effective governance for extreme heat in the context of the clean energy transition. As we have seen, 2024 has marked the warmest year on record, with rising temperatures and extreme heat events becoming a serious global challenge. This challenge disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, particularly in developing countries, and exacerbates already existing risks related to energy systems, public health, and economic resilience. The paper prepared by the Committee members outlines several important recommendations to address this challenge, but it also presents gaps and areas where we can go beyond "business as usual."

Missing Elements and Key Recommendations

1. Integrating Extreme Heat and Energy Resilience Across All Governance Levels

While the paper rightly highlights the importance of robust institutional frameworks and the need for intersectoral coordination, we must go further in integrating extreme heat preparedness within broader national and local governance structures. Extreme heat doesn't just affect public health or electricity demand—it impacts agriculture, water resources, urban planning, and social services. A more holistic, cross-sectoral governance approach, one that ties together urban planning, energy policies, and social welfare programs, is critical. By embedding extreme heat preparedness in urban development strategies, we can ensure that vulnerable populations aren't only protected during heat events but are also better equipped for long-term resilience.

2. Innovative Financing Mechanisms for the Energy Transition

The paper appropriately calls for increased investment in grid modernization, renewable energy, and decentralized energy systems. However, we must emphasize the need for innovative financing mechanisms, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where access to climate finance remains a significant barrier. In addition to promoting public-private partnerships, we should explore the potential for "green bonds" and "climate resilience bonds," which can direct funding towards projects that address both heat resilience and energy transition. Additionally, more substantial efforts are needed to lower the financial risks for investors willing to support decentralized energy solutions and energy-efficient cooling technologies. This may involve creating blended financing structures to mitigate the risks in fragile or developing economies.

3. Decentralized Governance and Community-Based Solutions

While the paper advocates for stronger coordination among national and subnational actors, we should place greater emphasis on the role of local communities and decentralized governance in building resilience. Local knowledge and involvement are key to designing solutions that are context-specific and sustainable. For instance, community-

led energy solutions such as microgrids or neighborhood cooling centers can be more adaptive and responsive than top-down approaches. Governments should prioritize empowering local authorities and communities with the tools, knowledge, and financial resources necessary to take action on heat resilience and clean energy transitions.

4. Data-Driven Decision Making and Adaptive Capacity

The paper identifies the importance of data and monitoring systems, which are crucial for predicting heat events and guiding policy decisions. However, we must ensure that data systems are not just reactive but also adaptive. This means leveraging real-time data and predictive models to anticipate extreme heat events, not just for early warnings but for adaptive policy-making and long-term planning. Additionally, governments should invest in capacity-building to ensure that local authorities can use these systems effectively, especially in areas where technical expertise is lacking.

5. Rethinking Cooling Technologies and Urban Heat Mitigation

The paper correctly emphasizes the need to adopt energy-efficient cooling systems, but we need to broaden the discussion around cooling. Cooling solutions must go beyond the traditional reliance on air-conditioning and refrigerants, which themselves often contribute to climate change through high energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Innovative cooling solutions such as green roofs, urban forests, and reflective building materials can be integrated into urban planning policies. These are low-tech, nature-based solutions that can significantly reduce urban heat islands while decreasing the overall demand for energy.

Global Context and Moving Beyond Business as Usual

The global context today is one of increasing uncertainty, with geopolitical shifts and economic pressures influencing the pace of climate action. As governments around the world face budget constraints, rising energy costs, and a growing number of natural calamities, there is a risk that extreme heat may continue to be treated as just one more urgent issue among many. However, as we consider the recommendations laid out in the paper, we must view the integration of heat resilience and clean energy not just as a challenge, but as an opportunity to transform governance systems, drive innovation, and build more resilient economies.

We have a chance to reimagine the way we govern heat resilience. It's not just about coping with the immediate impacts of extreme heat, it's about creating a new framework where energy systems, public health, infrastructure, and climate adaptation work in synergy. By leveraging cross-sectoral governance, innovative financing, and community-based solutions, we can create a future where extreme heat doesn't just become more manageable, but where we also advance toward a clean, sustainable energy future.

Thank you.