



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs



CLAD

Capacity Development Workshop on

**The Future of Governance and New Mindsets, Skills,
and Competencies for the Implementation of the SDGs**

10 – 13 November 2025 | Asunción, Paraguay

Capacity Development Workshop on

**“The Future of Governance and New Mindsets, Skills, and
Competencies for the Implementation of the SDGs”**

Organized by

**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
Latin American Centre for Administrative Development (CLAD)**

**10 – 13 November 2025
Asuncion, Paraguay**

Concept Note

Description of the Event

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), is organizing a Capacity Development panel on “The Future of Governance and New Mindsets, Skills, and Competencies for the Implementation of the SDGs” in collaboration with the Latin American Centre for Administrative Development (CLAD). The Workshop will take place in the framework of the CLAD’s annual conference being held in Asuncion, Paraguay 10 -13 November 2025.

The CLAD annual conference is organized with the support of the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Republic of Paraguay, through the Vice Ministry of Human Capital and Organizational Management. This Congress, now in its thirtieth year, has established itself as a diverse and highly technical space for debate, the exchange of experiences, and the generation of knowledge regarding the improvement of the State and public management in Latin America.

This year’s theme “Innovation, inclusion, and resilience: building states for the future” will analyze several structural and emerging challenges faced by Ibero-American societies that require a profound transformation of their public institutions. Although diverse in context and trajectory, they share common challenges: the need to expand the coverage and quality of public services, reduce persistent inequalities, restore citizen trust in democratic institutions, and adapt to changing scenarios marked by environmental, technological, and social crises¹.

Background

The 2024 Pact for the Future², adopted by the UN General Assembly, underlines the need for increased capacity-building efforts to bridge digital divides and foster innovation, futures thinking, and foresight among Member States. It underscores that strategic foresight is necessary to ensure long-term thinking and planning. As such, United Nations Member States have agreed “to develop and implement sustainable practices and the institutional reforms necessary to ensure evidence-based decision-making, while making governance more anticipatory, adaptive and responsive to future opportunities, risks and challenges. They agreed to ensure inclusive and equitable access to knowledge, science and information, while promoting innovation, critical thinking and life skills to create generations of citizens that are agents of positive change and transformation” (para.25).

Creating a forward-thinking culture is also the focus of work at the United Nations, as presented by the United Nations 2.0 Quintet of Change. The Quintet of Change offers a useful framework by focusing on innovation, strategic foresight, data-driven decision-making, digital transformation, and partnerships. It encourages a culture of agility and resilience, empowering governments to address emerging challenges with inclusive policies and sustainable solutions. By emphasizing systems thinking and integrated approaches, the Quintet can help to drive public

¹¹ <https://clad.org/eventos>

² <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-the-pact-for-the-future.pdf>, Pact for the Future, 2024

sector transformation, enabling impactful outcomes in a dynamic global environment. As noted, the framework outlines a modernized system with enhanced expertise in data, innovation, digital technology, foresight, and behavioral science to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Latin American countries face numerous sustainable development challenges that range from climate change, loss of biodiversity, food insecurity, and high levels of poverty among others. CLAD member countries have put in place strategies and implementation plans geared towards addressing some of these challenges to achieve long-term development goals as defined in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Latin American and Caribbean region must be prepared to take advantage of developments in technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), to create an environment which will lead to adaptability in mindset, resilience, and innovation. A holistic strategy is essential for transforming public service delivery and requires fostering new mindsets and behaviors in public servants. Governments may need to make urgent investments in retooling public services and equipping civil servants with new knowledge, skills, and competencies (UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration -CEPA, 2018) that are supportive of accelerating transformations for SDGs implementation in a more volatile, unstable, complex, and ambiguous world. This process involves promoting practical, competency-based learning and a culture of innovation and problem-solving.

Thematic Focus

Governance systems at the global and national levels are at a critical juncture. Although global governance institutions have achieved many successes since they were developed after the Second World War, the growing number of issues on the international agenda, and their complexity, is outpacing their ability to cope with them. National governments around the world are also struggling to address the impact of increasingly frequent and cascading global crises, from climate change to energy, geopolitical tensions, health, and food shortages. There is a growing belief that the current governance systems at all levels need to be transformed to effectively face current and future challenges and meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

Governance systems have profound and wide-ranging implications for society, the environment, and the economy. How societies govern themselves plays a crucial role in determining the well-being of all people and of sustainable development. Defining the governance systems of the future requires a deep understanding of the critical drivers of change as well as of the needs and aspirations of today's society in whichever forms and modalities they are being expressed (e.g., through social media, local communities, and cities). It calls for a better understanding of different governance models and their capacities to address present and future challenges. Governments and people need to rethink the values that should inform their social contract and how these are being interpreted and implemented, what kind of society they wish

to live in and what governance system is going to deliver meaningful freedom and well-being to the largest number of people.

Schools and institutes of administration also play a crucial role in preparing the public sector of the future and need to anticipate the mindsets, skills, and capacities needed as the quality of education and training in public administration significantly affects the quality of governance. Well-prepared and highly professional public servants are essential for effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions, leading to the design and implementation of policies, programs, and public services that improve people's quality of life. This, in turn, promotes trust in government and contributes to the achievement of the sustainable development.

The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#) states in Article 26 that: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children”.

In order to define future governance systems in Latin America and the Caribbean, a deep understanding of the critical drivers of change as well as of the needs and aspirations of today's society is required. The workshop will explore practices and approaches to support changing mindsets for innovation and digital transformation of public services, as well as capacity building strategies to support a whole-of-society and public sector transformation, defined as a “a continuous process of leading and managing change in the public service for innovative adaptation to enable the delivery of services and results in a resilient and sustainable manner” (CARICAD, 2021).

UN DESA, in collaboration with schools of public administration, has developed a competency framework outlined in the publication 'Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.³ This framework identifies key mindsets and associated competencies crucial for advancing the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Changing mindsets, defined as beliefs and attitudes that affect the way we think and behave, is needed among government officials and society to promote policy change and better services. The competencies focus on forward-looking attributes to build a new organizational culture, emphasizing practical behaviors aligned with the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda to drive mindset change and address complex challenges.

³<https://publicadministration.desa.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/2023/Changing%20mindsets%20report%20-%20201%20October.pdf>, Report on Changing Mindsets to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, New York, 2021

Building foresight and innovation mindsets among public sector officials in Latin American and the Caribbean is critical to enhance public service delivery. Approaches rooted in systems thinking support governments to progress in the three dimensions of sustainable development, including economic, social, and environmental.⁴ Innovation and foresight mindsets are needed to promote sound policymaking, as it fosters resilient and adaptable approaches for future challenges and opportunities. Governments and people need to rethink the values that should inform their social contract and how these are being interpreted and implemented, what kind of society they wish to live in and what governance system is going to deliver meaningful freedom and well-being to the largest number of people.

This capacity development panel will build in DPIDG's previous and current experience working with CLAD as well as other schools and institutes around the world on anticipatory governance, the mainstreaming of the SDGs, and in supporting a transformation in the public sector with new mindsets for innovation, strategic foresight, data governance, digital transformation for the implementation of the SDGs.

Methodology and Format

The capacity development panel will feature presentations by experts and hands-on interactive exercises and discussions to promote changing mindsets in the public sector. Participants will learn about governance futures. Innovative governance strategies, which can be applied to participants' specific contexts, will be discussed. The capacity development panel will involve participants prioritizing their individual, organizational, and institutional needs for public sector transformation and developing action plans for implementation.

The in-person capacity development panel will be conducted in Asuncion, Paraguay within the framework of the CLAD annual conference from 10 – 12 November 2025. Working language will be Spanish.

Target Audience

Ministers and Secretary Generals of National Institutes of Public Administration Training, and program directors and general directors of schools and institutes of public administration of CLAD member countries, as well as government officials, think tanks representatives, practitioners from the public sector, civil society organization representatives, the private sector, and officials from regional and international organizations engaged in shaping and implementing public policies attending the CLAD annual Congress. Member countries of CLAD include several SIDS, LLDCs, and LDCs of the Americas and Africa. A large number of government officials and practitioners from the host country, Paraguay (LLDC), is expected to attend the Congress.

⁴ <https://desapublications.un.org/policy-briefs/un-desa-policy-brief-no-158-how-can-we-accelerate-transformations-achieve-sustainable-development-goals-it-shone-light-on-two-challenges-the-world-is-facing>., UN DESA Policy Brief No. 158, 2024

Objective

The in-person capacity development panel aims to:

1. Enhance capacities of schools and institutes of administration, government officials and practitioners of the Americas in the use of anticipatory governance for innovation, changing mindsets, digital and data governance in support of a more agile, efficient, and inclusive public sectors of their Member States.
2. Strengthen the understanding of current and future drivers of change, and a better understanding of the new skills and mindsets required for a better public sector.
3. Provide sound and innovative advice to participants on what kind of competencies framework is needed for a governance future oriented public sector and what type of reforms are needed to achieve them.
4. Uncover challenges and identify building blocks.
5. Learn and apply new concepts, tools, and approaches to support strategies, capabilities, and action planning.

Expected Results

By the end of the workshops, participants will have:

ER.1 – Enhanced knowledge, by participants (including representatives of schools and institutes of administration and public sector practitioners) of the drivers of change that might affect the future of governance and the key needed areas of change in the public sector. Participants will leave the workshop with a better sense of how new mindsets, such as innovation and foresight mindsets, can be directly applied at the individual, organization, and institutional level.

ER. 2 - Enhanced capacity of schools and institutes of administration participants, as well as public sector officials and practitioners of attending countries in the use of anticipatory governance for innovation, changing mindsets, digital and data governance in support of a more agile, efficient, and inclusive public sectors.

Means of verification for the expected outcomes include:

- A survey on the drivers of change in Latin America will be distributed among participants.
- An post-workshop survey will also be conducted to assess the perceived knowledge acquired by participants.
- Workshop/training reports with participant evaluations indicating increased knowledge of the drivers of change that might affect the future of governance and the key needed areas of change in the public sector. This information will be collected through an after-workshop survey.

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