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**22<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Opening Remarks  
by**

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**Monday, 27 March 2023, 10:15 am  
Conference Room 4, Conference Building (CB)**

Madame Chairperson,

Distinguished members of the Committee,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I join Ambassador Stoeva in warmly welcoming you to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee whether here in Conference Room 4 or connecting online around the world. Your commitment to delivering on the shared vision for people and planet that is embodied in the 2030 Agenda is an inspiration.

I would also like to extend congratulations, and appreciation, to the newly elected Bureau.

The theme of this 22<sup>nd</sup> session is “Urgently transforming institutions for a greener, more inclusive and more resilient world at a time of multiple crises.” From the ongoing effects of the

pandemic to climate change, environmental degradation, inequalities, financial hardship, open conflict and so many other challenges that are both causes and consequences of instability on a global scale, sustainability as a so-called ‘wicked’ problem seems an understatement.

But, delivering on sustainable development is not a completely intractable problem either. Much depends on systems of governance and public administration to steer the course, as you know. There are clear indications of political will to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at all levels. How best can public institutions support this vision? What can we learn from one another about the technical underpinnings of institution building that will take us there?

In the forthcoming SDG Progress Report that DESA produces, it appears that transformations are possible if structural barriers are addressed and means of implementation are strengthened to scale up action. Contributing your views on the most significant structural barriers to sustainable development and how, concretely, they could be addressed through improvements in governance is your task as an experts’ body.

Looking at the week ahead, the agreed implementation plan of the Sharm El-Sheik Climate Conference held this past November emphasizes that accelerated financial support for developing countries from developed countries and other sources is critical. Your practitioner perspectives on the ongoing challenges faced by many developing countries in accessing climate finance can help address the gaps between needs and funding in responding to the adverse effects of climate change, particularly at the subnational level where financing is often problematic.

The pledge to leave no one behind compels us to encourage decisive action on addressing the effects of climate change and intricacies of environmental degradation in countries affected by conflict. As CEPA points out, governance in conflict-affected settings is inherently difficult.

Are there already good practices emerging in environmental management under such conditions and what could be learned from them?

You will also take up the standing question of the application of the United Nations principles of effective governance for sustainable development with a deep dive on the principle of participation in support of the SDGs, in these times of wavering trust in institutions, crisis management and rapidly evolving technology (that has altered the way many people interact with one another and with policymakers) participation is an anchor of democracies around the world.

In your renewed discussion of indicators of effective governance, I would encourage you to move as quickly as methodological rigour allows. Lack of quality data is routinely cited as an issue in SDG progress, including in the voluntary national reviews. The Praia Group of the Statistical Commission has done a solid job of methodological development along some dimensions of governance. Your effort to extend multidimensional analysis to all governance domains holds great promise in strengthening the analytical basis for institutional reforms across the whole-of-government.

You will also continue your important analysis of public sector workforce matters, public financial management and emerging issues in digital government. Changing public sector mindsets to promote systems thinking and collaboration, improving budget credibility and fostering public sector innovation through the strategic diffusion, management and use of technology, this is what we call cutting edge advice.

You recommend multidimensional analyses of institutions in relation to national sustainable development priorities and an agile portfolio approach to addressing capability gaps

across the whole of government. This is an interesting observation that is reminiscent of the Integrated National Financing Framework initiative and could benefit from further elaboration.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

DESA stands ready to continue lending its full support to your work. As many of you know, this entails a valuable partnership with the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union. As we have said before, it is a model of collaboration. I invite other regional organizations to consider entry points for operationalizing the principles with similar enthusiasm.

Many of you have also been actively involved in preparing for the session during the intersessional period. Your contributions are highly appreciated.

I wish you a productive session and look forward to the continued engagement of all members and observers with the United Nations throughout the year.

I thank you for your attention.