



Principles of effective governance for delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all *

Summary

Referring to the application of the principles of effective governance, the Committee emphasized that the transformation towards sustainable development called for urgent attention to questions of inclusion and equity in governance systems. This was particularly important, as achieving the Goals and leaving no one behind depended on the provision of substantive equality of opportunity for all across the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner.

Addressing the need for equitable governance to deliver sustainable development

The Committee highlighted that, as the timeline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals approached, vulnerable groups frequently lacked opportunities and socioeconomic resources, were particularly affected by ongoing multiple crises and at risk of being left behind. To achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda, there was an urgent need to refocus attention on ending poverty in all its forms, address discrimination and exclusion and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities that hindered human potential, especially at the local level, where disparities and inequalities were more evident.

Achieving equitable and sustainable development for all required a holistic and multifaceted approach that integrated economic growth with social equity and environmental sustainability. Such an approach could help to provide equal opportunities for all and reach even the most vulnerable, lifting them out of poverty, offering well-being and social protection, promoting dignity and fostering resilience.

Equitable governance, which referred to the rule of law and the fair distribution of power, responsibilities, wealth, resources and opportunities within society, was a significant factor. Political will also played a

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crucial role, notably the will to address structural and financial constraints and the determination to translate policies and knowledge into action.

The Committee noted that strong institutions, effective governance and commitment to human rights, the rule of law, accountability and transparency were prerequisites for equitable and sustainable development. Action in those areas also contributed to building trust in government and establishing a supportive and stable environment for economic growth.

Sound and targeted strategies were required to address the unique challenges and opportunities of

each country, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. In order to promote social cohesion and economic stability, various strategies and approaches, such as decent work, progressive taxation, increased access to social services and inclusive labour markets, should be pursued. Reforms that fought and curbed corruption, improved the effectiveness of the public sector, promoted local revenue autonomy and allowed for more participatory decision-making could be given greater priority.

Public investment as an enabler of sustainable development for all

The Committee stressed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development of any country were based on the human potential of its institutions, organizations, territories and communities. Thus, investing in human capital needed to be seen as a priority. That implied the need to promote equal opportunities in education, science and knowledge-sharing, with expanded access to high-quality education at all levels, from early childhood to the post-secondary level, and including vocational and professional training. To improve life expectancy and lower the burden of diseases, investment in public health programmes and

healthcare infrastructure and ensuring access to necessary health services were also critical.

The development of sustainable infrastructure and connectivity was another area of public investment that required attention, in particular to bridge digital divides. Infrastructure improvements in various areas, such as health, energy, water and sanitation, housing and transportation, could increase market accessibility, boost competitiveness and improve living standards, thereby fostering economic and social progress.

Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and international cooperation

The Committee observed that providing opportunities for all required a change of mindset, adaptability and multi-stakeholder collaboration, including between the public and private sectors. That required a whole-of-society approach and a change in the way that public institutions, private businesses, civil society organizations, academic and research

communities and citizens worked together to achieve equitable and sustainable development. Building sustainable communities and cities required localization of the Goals in a way that encouraged State and non-State actors to work together in the creation and design of innovative and sustainable solutions. Mapping and disseminating good practices,

peer learning and review, benchmarking, empowerment and capacity-building could inspire others.

In line with Goal 17, international cooperation and partnerships were crucial for facilitating equitable and sustainable development. Engaging actively in multilateral forums, seeking strategic partnerships

and leveraging technical and financial assistance would be crucial. Shared responsibilities were key to ensuring that no country was being left behind. Promoting diverse forms of international cooperation and partnerships, in particular South-South and triangular cooperation, was also key, as such partnerships could take into account the realities and needs of the partners involved.

Strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development

The Committee further engaged in a dialogue with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme on strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development for all and underscored that the enhanced governance of energy, agrifood and labour administration systems could reduce poverty and inequality, create jobs, strengthen trust in institutions and benefit all of society. Decisive leadership, systems thinking, improved approaches, equipping stakeholders with a long-term perspective and improved capacities for collective action were needed. Digital technology, data and science could help.

The most delicate issue in a systems approach was finding appropriate governance arrangements to

manage trade-offs. Challenges in institutional capacities and fragmentation across sectors commonly hindered action. At the same time, strong institutions for sustainable development across sectors had a critical role to play in navigating various interests. United Nations agencies had found it useful to refer to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in strengthening governance systems and were committed to collaboration and partnerships in promoting coherent and transformative action.

► **The Committee's deliberations are supported by expert papers prepared by the members in advance of the session. For more in-depth analysis of this issue, see United Nations official document [E/C.16/2025/3](#).**

Action by the Economic and Social Council

On 30 July 2025, the Council adopted resolution 2025/31 on the report of the Committee on its twenty-fourth session (as contained in [E/2025/L.23](#)). By this resolution, the Council:

Reiterates that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and encourages Governments to strengthen efforts to build inclusive institutions that promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all segments of society and to reduce inequalities through holistic, people-centred policies and interventions that address the needs of the

poorest and most vulnerable as a matter of priority;

Reaffirms the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and subnational governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and encourages governments at all levels to apply the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Council in its resolution [2018/12](#) of 2 July 2018, to all public institutions and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account different governance structures, national and subnational realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities;

Encourages the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines and experiences to operationalize the principles at the national and subnational levels, including from sectoral perspectives, and to further engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard, in an inclusive manner, together with all relevant stakeholders;

Notes with appreciation the work of the United Nations development system on strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development and to addressing interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs among the Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development.