

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**24th SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Opening Remarks  
by**

**Ms. Bjørg Sandkjaer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs**

**Monday, 7 April 2025, 10:15 am  
Economic and Social Council Chamber**

Madame Chair,

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, it is my distinct pleasure to join Ambassador Ndong Mba in welcoming you to the 24<sup>th</sup> session of CEPA.

I would also like to congratulate the newly elected Bureau and echo the Ambassador in extending sincere gratitude to all members for your unwavering commitment to the work of CEPA and to the larger aims of the United Nations over the past four years.

This week you will be exploring governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science and evidence-based solutions for the SDGs. The theme of this 24<sup>th</sup> session is timely. It not only aligns with ECOSOC's own theme for 2025. It also resonates with the Secretary-General's priorities: to work for peace, reduce inequalities, address the climate crisis, and reduce the risks of unchecked technological advancement, enabled by a forward-

thinking UN culture powered by a fusion of innovation, data, digital, foresight and behavioural science skills.

Ambassador Ndong Mba referred to the Pact for the Future adopted by Heads of State and Government in September 2024. Through the commitments of the Pact and its two annexes – the Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations – world leaders have sent a strong signal that we must take urgent and concrete action to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations.

This message of attending to the present reality while integrating reflections of a long-term vision of society in public policymaking is a central tenet of effective governance for sustainable development and enduring feature of CEPA's policy advice on transformation of governance systems.

Looking to the week ahead, the ECOSOC Vice-President mentioned your contribution to the 2025 ECOSOC theme and facilitation of a VNR peer exchange on institution building.

You will also continue your elaboration of the UN principles of effective governance for sustainable development and their application at national and subnational levels with a focus on questions of equity.

Later this year, world leaders will gather in Doha for the Second World Summit for Social Development to address gaps and recommit to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Your reflections on how equitable governance practices have been applied in different contexts will be a useful addition to our understanding of progress towards the WSSD objectives of eradicating poverty, promoting full and productive employment, and fostering social inclusion.

In your assessment of institutions, climate action and environment, you will consider governance issues pertaining to the dual challenge of addressing extreme heat events and fostering the clean energy transition. It is a subject with very real implications for people's lives as the significant threats posed by extreme heat to public health, economies and ecosystems continue to mount. A set of standard operating procedures that help countries prepare for and respond to the growing perils associated with extreme heat events could be a valuable extension of your work.

I note that you will also continue your study of the use of artificial intelligence systems in public administration, methods of achieving sustainable public finance, and strategies for attracting and retaining a qualified public sector workforce while attracting younger workers. Success in realizing the commitments of the 2023 SDG Summit, as well as the Pact for the Future, depends fundamentally on bolstering government capabilities in each of these areas in ways that are in tune with the current global context.

The Committee has rightly said that the limited capacity to foresee and build resilience against the diverse challenges originating from multiple shocks in many countries poses substantial risks. Your thought leadership is vital to getting past outmoded paradigms that imply a business-as-usual approach.

Lastly, you will examine the mutually reinforcing relationship between mental health and recovery from conflict in conflict-affected areas. This groundbreaking discussion can be very relevant to the 2025 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, jointly mandated by the General Assembly and Security Council, as it will help inform ECOSOC's views on building and sustaining peace in post-conflict settings.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Some eight years ago – at the beginning of a long term of engagement for some of you – the UN principles of effective governance were adopted by the Committee and endorsed by ECOSOC. With the encouragement of the Council, through the dedicated leadership of the members, and with the support of DESA and partners in all regions of the world, we have together come a long way. The principles and associated practices comprise a durable reference that will outlast the current term and serve public administration practitioners and scholars well into future.

The dedication you have shown to the ideals of the United Nations and to our collective effort to achieve sustainable development for all is deeply appreciated. I look forward to your expert guidance on further action to propel us forward.

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