COMPENDIUM OF BASIC UNITED NATIONS TERMINOLOGY IN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Overview of the Working Group on Terminology

- The working group was established during the fifth session of the Committee.

- Its mandate is to prepare a glossary of basic terminology used in the United Nations, to be presented and approved before the mandate of the Committee expires in 2009.

- Subsequently, a technical on-line publication containing the glossary will be issued by the Secretariat.

Character and Scope of the Glossary

- The character and scope of the glossary proposed in the working group's preliminary report were discussed at the Committee's sixth session.

- The working group proposed that the glossary be of a non-binding legal nature.

- There are two uses for such a glossary: to improve the clarity of the intergovernmental deliberations of the United Nations itself; and to assist Member States to better implement United Nations resolutions

List of Terms: Criteria

- At the Sixth Session of CEPA, it was proposed that the glossary start with the definition of terms mostly "used in:

  (a) United Nations documents and
  (b) in the international arena.

- The Chair suggested that the first draft of the glossary be in English.

- The glossary should be an official United Nations document and 'open', as it is a work in progress, subject to periodical revisions, enlargements and permanent review of its contents.

List of Terms: Criteria (Ctd.)

- Committee members agreed to start small and build on success. The task should be continuous, and the glossary should proceed gradually from the most widely used terms, contested or accepted by all.

- At its fifth session, the Committee proposed a List of terms for the glossary to be checked against the list of terms commonly used in official documents and resolutions in the United Nations.

Overview of the Progress Made to Date

At its sixth session, CEPA agreed that, with the support of the Secretariat, it would finalize the list of terms to be presented at its forthcoming session, which would serve as a basis for subsequent work.

Achievements:

- The Chair, in collaboration with major universities, prepared definitions for 10 terms, which are contained in a Conference Paper.

- Working with various UN offices, the Secretariat checked the preliminary list presented by the WG at the fifth session of the Committee against terms commonly used in United Nations official documents and resolutions. The Secretariat produced a list of most commonly used terms in the UN.

The Way Forward

1. Discuss and agree on the proposed initial list of terms to be defined from now until next CEPA Meeting in 2009 (indicate which terms are approved and which are not);

2. Discuss whether the <u>Format</u> of the definitions proposed by the Chair of the WG meet the criteria of Model C;

3. Discuss and agree on the volunteers of the WG who will be responsible for drafting at least 3 terms each (directly or indirectly);

The Way Forward (ctd.)

4. Discuss and agree on Working Modalities of the WG:

    - Members of the WG could communicate electronically according to a timing provided by the Chair of the WG;

    - Discuss whether it would be useful, as a final step, to convene a meeting of the Working Group two days prior to the eighth session of CEPA to review and agree on the definitions of the terms in the initial list;

The Way Forward: Proposed List of Initial Terms to be defined

ITEM 1. Based on the list agreed upon by the WG and checked against frequency in UN documents, the Chair suggests for review and approval the following initial list of terms:

1) Accountability
2) Citizens' Participation
3) Delivery of Services
4) Civil Society
5) Decentralization
6) Rule of Law
7) Governance
8) Government
9) Transparency
10) Administrative Efficiency

The Way Forward: Proposed List of Initial Terms to be defined (ctd.)

11) Globalization

12) Independent Administrative Authorities

13) Best Practices

14) Local and Regional Government

15) Agencies

16) Administrative Justice

17) Administrative Action review /Administrative Controls

18) Citizens' Charters

19) Courts and Tribunals

20) Adjudication

The Way Forward: Proposed List of Initial Terms to be defined (ctd.)

21) Regulation/Deregulation

22) Administrative Procedure and Procedural Rights

23) Administrative Participation and Hearings

24) Judicial review

25) Maladministration

26) Public Procurement

27) Concessions

28) Equality

29) Equal Administrative Treatment

30) Public Services

The Way Forward: Proposed List of Initial Terms to be defined (ctd.)

31) Precautionary Principles

32) Private Finance Initiatives

33) In House Providing

34) Outsourcing/Contracting Out

35) Alternative Dispute resolution

36) Subsidiarity

37) Proportionality Principle

38) Legal Certainty

39) New Public Management

40) E-Government

The Way Forward: Proposed List of Initial Terms to be defined (ctd.)

41) Welfare State

42) Administrative Simplification

43) Access

44) Devolution

45) Committees

The Way Forward: Format Model C

ITEM 2: The Committee decided to adopt Model C, which features a shortened definition and links to other terms, augmented by reference materials posted on the website of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Ombudsman

- Concise Definition:

  Ombudsman is a term of Scandinavian origin, then spread in many countries and in international organizations. The term indicates a public body charged of vast powers, including the control on public administration and the redress of complaints against maladministration.

- Explanatory Note and References:

  The Ombusman powers' scope may vary in the national legal orders, with emphasis on the role of bridging the gap between citizens and public authorities (this role is expressed by the French term "Mediateur") or as instrument of guarantee – of non judicial character – of the singles (expressed by the Spanish term "Defensor del Pueblo", or by the Italian term "Difensore civico"). (see conference paper)

THE WAY FORWARD: Volunteers for the WG

- ITEM 3:

  Volunteers for the WG to continue its work?

- ITEM 4:

  Do the experts agree on the working modalities?