

2024 ECOSOC Coordination Segment
ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations

**Session on “Effective, strong and responsive institutions
to achieve the SDGs and the future we want”**

Wednesday, 31 January 2024, 16:30-18:00 NY time

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Focus/question

What are the necessary steps to restore trust in public institutions? What are the key measures to be pursued to transform institutions and advance the 2030 Agenda at a time of multiple complex crises?

Talking points

Key measures to transform institutions and advance the 2030 Agenda

Anchor the SDGs in the public discourse as a policy framework for the future – Explicitly renew commitments to prioritize and plan for implementation of the SDGs. In particular, use the SDGs as a policy framework for the future and guidance to overcome the current polycrisis and to foster resilience; strengthen the references to SDGs in country-specific development strategies, visions and national development plans, emphasizing both economic growth and social policy support to fight hunger, poverty and climate change.

Invest in changing public sector mindsets and raising awareness of the SDGs at all levels – A competent and engaged public sector workforce can make all the difference. In particular, progress towards the SDGs can be enabled by promoting a change of mindsets and taking further steps to raise awareness of the SDGs and their targets among the public sector workforce at all levels.

Strengthen commitments to sustainable development through national budgets – Beyond planning, integrate implementation of the Goals firmly into budget processes and procedures as a matter of priority. The SDGs should be infused into the work of national treasuries such that finance ministers view commitments to the Goals as part of the guidance that informs budget processes and not as an adjunct reporting requirement. This could entail the integration of the Goals in

processes throughout the budgeting cycle from initial planning to monitoring of the efficiency of expenditure measures. Integrating budgeting functions into the coordinating structures for SDG implementation could also be of benefit.

Foster agile, and data- and insight-driven institutions to strengthen resiliency – Agile, and data- and insight-driven institutions are necessary to improve preparedness and resiliency in managing crises. Building such institutions depends on access to new skill sets and fostering collaborative, more citizen-centred mindsets among public servants to foresee and build resilience to potential future shocks.

Apply the principles of effective governance for sustainable development – The application of the principles of effective governance remains a foundation of the Committee’s work. With the support of DESA, an expanding series of technical guidance notes has been produced on many different practice areas such as sound policymaking (including strategic foresight, promotion of policy coherence, monitoring and evaluation systems, participatory budgeting, elements of leaving no one behind, etc.).

Mobilize participation of citizens and stakeholders and actively engage in international partnerships, cooperation and coordination – Collaboration to address problems of common interest calls for strengthened civic engagement; broad engagement of stakeholders, including participation of women and youth in parliamentary and electoral processes as candidates and voters; intensification of multilateral public private partnerships to better align financial support, capacity-building, training and insurance in response to the climate crisis; enlargement of opportunities for peer learning including through the VNRs and VLRs; and promotion of joint action among international and regional organizations, such as UN system entities, AU/APRM and others.

Restoring trust in public institutions

Political and social trust may be strengthened through the implementation of sound public policy, for example, in initiatives that directly contribute to the achievement of national or local sustainable development priorities. Policies and reforms that demonstrably respond to people’s concerns, such as reducing poverty, inequality and crime, expanding opportunities for employment and decent work for all, combating the impacts of climate change or protecting terrestrial ecosystems, can substantially enhance public trust.

A stronger case should be made for the contribution of evidence to improve social and economic outcomes while also accounting for how information is used and communicated, for example by translating ideas and evidence into issues that matter for different segments of society.

The spread of mis- and disinformation, the proliferation of digital platforms and the growing political polarization, also demand an active role from public servants involved in drafting public communication strategies aimed at informing and inspiring citizens to take positive actions, in the pursuit of the SDGs.

The Committee has noted two main variants of public trust: political and social trust. Political trust occurs when citizens consider government and its institutions, policymaking in general and/or individual political leaders as promise -keeping, efficient, fair and honest. Social trust refers to citizens' confidence in each other as members of a social community. Political and social trust can enhance social cohesion and promote peaceful and inclusive societies, which in turn reinforces trust in government in a virtuous circle.