

**Economic and Social Council  
Management Segment  
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**Briefing on the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of CEPA**

**By Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chair of the Committee**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to brief you on the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, which took place from 27 to 31 March. Our agenda was ambitious and wide-ranging, focusing on urgently transforming institutions for a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient world at a time of multiple crises.

Meeting the challenges of transforming institutions at the speed and scale required to achieve the SDGs will depend on accelerated efforts to build a capable State at all levels and in all areas of government action relevant to the Goals.

We underscore that accelerating and deepening institutional integration through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches can bring about transformative changes in governance and public policies in line with the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda. A main challenge is to convey these integrated solutions as compelling, action-oriented narratives that can galvanize all stakeholders in support of lasting solutions, eschewing quick palliative approaches, overcoming mis- and dis-information, and bridging social, economic and political divides.

In addition, we note with concern that the cascade of simultaneous crises has been undermining the resilience of governments at all levels, as well as their capacity to address the root causes of complex challenges in a holistic and context-sensitive manner.

The ability to respond quickly and effectively to crises is essential. An excessive focus on crisis management, however, has led to relative neglect of six approaches to policymaking that are essential to delivery of sustainable development: long-term thinking, risk management, use of best available knowledge, stakeholder participation, promotion of collaborative mindsets among public sector workers, and leveraging of public financial management mechanisms to bridge financing gaps.

Going forward, agile, transparent, efficient, data- and insight-driven institutions will be required so that governments are better prepared and more resilient in managing crises and advancing the interconnected sustainable development goals. Building such institutions will depend on access to new skill sets and fostering of more citizen-centred and collaborative mindsets among public servants. A review of public sector workforce capabilities to achieve the SDGs and of related training efforts is part of the solution.

Furthermore, we see inclusiveness as the cornerstone of sustainable development. Accordingly, countries should build on efforts to implement their own models of participation that leave no one behind, while strengthening the enabling environment for civic engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has both accelerated the digital transition and revealed technological weaknesses of public administrations while exacerbating inequalities caused by digital divides. That said, we believe that stimulating public sector innovation through digital technology remains a critical and complex issue with implications for all parts of government. National digital strategies and hybrid approaches to public service delivery are required which reflect people's needs and aspirations while building digital trust, bridging divides, and respecting human rights online, alongside continuous efforts to anticipate and respond to the impact of technological advances on government and society.

In addition, to better face the ongoing multiple crises, we suggest strengthening revenue forecasting and planning, and public financial management, while ensuring accountability, transparency, and participation in budget processes. Importantly, efforts are needed to improve budget credibility and reduce excessive budget deviations to prevent a negative impact on SDG achievement and ensure that no one is left behind.

With regards to governance indicators, we find that multidimensional coverage of each of the 11 principles of effective governance could provide a useful way to enhance policy analysis related to SDG 16 and that indicators should be detailed enough to capture the quality of a government's response to the SDGs while addressing important analytical gaps in review processes, including the VNRs and VLRs.

In support of the global response to climate change, we note a need for expanded capacity of countries to access climate finance, paired with an increased focus on climate adaptation. Training and assistance to improve the skills of developing country governments, and subnational authorities in particular, in analyzing data and designing climate projects that could attract investments should be expanded as a matter of priority. We also see value in linking institution-building and environmental management in peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries.

Finally, in line with past practice, and in accordance with the recommendation for consideration by ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies to explore further opportunities to include voluntary national review countries, we invited Guyana, Malaysia, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia as well as the cities of Barcelona and Buenos Aires with the objective of promoting direct interaction on institutional aspects of Goals 16 and 17. We also held a dedicated consultation with observers. Both were very well received.

Our session concluded with the adoption of a draft resolution and a draft decision for the Council's consideration. We also affirmed our contribution to the 2023 HLPF.

In closing, I would like to assure you, Mister Vice-President, of CEPA's ongoing commitment to support accelerated progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda. We remain eager supporters of cooperation across the ECOSOC system and are looking forward to our future collaborative efforts.

I thank you.