

Opening remarks by

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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
TO THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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Madame Chair,
Distinguished Members of CEPA,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you at the opening of the 17th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. I present my congratulations to all of you as newly appointed members of the Committee, and wish you a productive and impactful work over the next four years.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the important contribution of this committee to the work of ECOSOC. CEPA plays a crucial role in providing policy advice on issues related to governance, institutions, and public administration.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Committee has placed the 2030 Agenda at the centre of its work. This is welcome and appreciated. Effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. They are now front and centre in our shared vision of global progress - with a Goal of their own, SDG 16, and interlinkages with all the Goals.

The main theme of the Council for 2018 is "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities."

This theme encompasses notions that have been central to the work of the Committee. One of them is the relationship among the various levels of government. Your past work on local authorities and the conditions that can foster an effective relationship among national and sub-national governments is fully relevant.

The question of resilience calls for further thinking. In the context of implementing the SDGs, we are not only talking about enhancing the resilience of natural and social systems, but also, and importantly, of governance systems. An important linkage is how

public institutions incorporate uncertainty and risk in the way they operate. Promoting policy and institutional coherence can also help increase resilience by identifying, managing and as much as possible avoiding tensions and trade-offs generated by actions in different sectors. It can also prevent policies in one area having negative effects in another area. Similarly, your work to identify principles of effective governance for sustainable development may be very helpful and support enhanced resilience across all functions of government. It can guide efforts to make institutions effective, inclusive and accountable – which is also a way to build resilience of countries and societies.

Your insights on public sector reform, open government, digital government and on leaving no one behind as a core principle of public administration can also be brought to bear.

I am pleased to see you will be devoting part of your session to these issues. I also look forward to your contribution to the thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC on the closely related subject of building inclusive and resilient societies. It is important for CEPA to contribute to this overall review of progress towards the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

I would like to highlight the question of participation and engagement. Engagement is critical to achieving the goals set in the new Agenda. ECOSOC has already held a series of meetings on this topic this year with a range of stakeholders. A Special Meeting of the Council entitled “Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”, will be held a month from now in New York. Here also is an area that the Committee has covered extensively in the past. This is the perfect time to bring salient recommendations to the fore.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Your work touches on key facets of the new Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, and its relevance is bound to increase as we progress on implementing them. I am convinced that participatory public institutions, visionary public leadership, and a competent public sector, endowed with adequate means, can help move us forward on the path to sustainable development.

Looking ahead, your work in coming months and years looks exciting. Next year, the High-Level Political Forum will review the goal dedicated to institutions, SDG 16. I hope the Committee at the same time realizes the importance of this and the expectations that will fall on its members on this occasion, and relishes the opportunity to provide a strong contribution to this discussion.

More broadly, and to conclude, in your work over the next years, I would like to encourage the Committee to continue as it has started. Bring on your expertise on public administration and show us how it can help us deliver the SDGs. I am convinced that as we move beyond the initial phase of discovery of the SDGs, we will all realize how overarching the question of getting institutions right is for the ultimate success of the Agenda.

ECOSOC will be looking forward to your advice on all these aspects and beyond.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations during this week.

Thank you.