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Remarks

Virtual Workshop on Principles of Sound Policymaking for Sustainable Development  
Thursday, 18 February 2021, 10 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (EST)

Distinguished participants,  
Resident Coordinators,  
Colleagues,

On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this workshop on sound policymaking for sustainable development.

I wish to thank Ms. Mona Pizani, Vice-Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), and the moderator of this session today, for her collaboration with us on this initiative.

I also want to thank her for her ongoing efforts to promote the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in Latin America.

The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic presents a serious challenge to national and sub-national institutions around the world.

In the short-term, the pandemic has affected the way in which public services are delivered. It has disrupted the regular functioning of state institutions and continues to affect key government functions and processes, undermining the effectiveness of government action.

We must act decisively and urgently to ensure the resilience of institutions to COVID-19 and other shocks.

In the longer-term recovery, The Decade of Action, supported by Heads of State at the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit in September 2019, calls for accelerating sustainable solutions to challenges such as climate change, inequality and closing the finance gap.

It specifically calls for action at the local level, such as embedding necessary transitions in policies, budgets, institutions and the regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This morning we are discussing the principle of sound policymaking, identified by CEPA as one of its eleven principles of effective governance.

Like all the other principles, sound policymaking is universally applicable, relevant in all government paradigms regardless of variations in national legal systems. It is flexible enough to account for different national realities, capacities and levels of development.

Governments are and should be at the centre of efforts to marshal initiatives to mobilize financing, enhance national implementation and strengthen institutions to achieve the sustainable development objectives by the target date and leave no one behind.

Sound policymaking is crucial for the development of national sustainable development strategies. The integrated nature of the SDGs and the process of coherent policymaking converge. Both systematically consider the pursuit of multiple policy goals in a coordinated way in an attempt to minimize trade-offs and contradictions and maximize synergies.

Foresight and visioning exercises can be used to inform strategic priorities of national development strategies; and national and sectoral plans should be evidence-based, drawing on the science-policy interface. They are made more effective with monitoring and evaluation which must assess causes of success and failures.

The principle you are discussing today, that of sound policymaking, together with the other ten principles enumerated by CEPA and endorsed by ECOSOC in 2018, can thus make a significant contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. They could also be useful in providing a conceptual framework for the institutional factors of political economy analysis, for example in connection with a Common Country Analysis (CCA).

Distinguished participants,

Several countries are presently working with the UN and other partners efforts to develop integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs), which aim to facilitate contributions of all sources and types of financing and deliver on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Adequate institutional capacity to guide and underpin the entire INFF process is crucial for making the sustainable development goals achievable. Guidance recently published by DESA sets out a governance framework for the success of an INFF.

The strategy guidance notes that will be discussed in this workshop describe the broader landscape of specific practice areas relevant to an INFF – such as how to overcome silos and promote coherent policymaking. They also provide important markers pointing in the direction of methods, guidelines and technical assistance available for those who wish to go deeper and take action.

We are very pleased to have the involvement of empowered, development-focused Resident Coordinators and members of the United Nations Country Teams in this initiative. Resident Coordinators play a pivotal role in country-level strategic engagement towards the 2030 Agenda.

Inclusive dialogues with national partners are ongoing as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks are rolled out. DESA stands ready to support these efforts.

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that, in many areas of the world, progress is insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Experience shows that policy reforms to strengthen much needed governance capabilities require concerted effort and bold structural changes. At the same time, many pragmatic improvements in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, implemented incrementally over a period of years, can yield important long-term results as CEPA has pointed out.

Let us join efforts to strengthen evidence-based policymaking and analytical capacity as we move forward on action and delivery for sustainable development.

I thank you for your kind attention and I wish us all an interesting and successful workshop.

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