

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

Message by
MR. WU HONGBO
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
12th session of the Committee of Expert on Public Administration
New York, 15 April 2013

To be delivered by Mr. Thomas Steltzer
Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Madame Chairperson,
President of the Economic and Social Council,
Distinguished Delegates, Experts and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Under Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo, I would like to express my pleasure to address the opening of the 12th session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration on the important subject of the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda.

As you know the United Nations is engaged in consultations on the development of a framework for a post-2015 Development Agenda across the globe that will succeed the Millennium Development Goals. Two years ago, the Secretary General established the United Nations System Task Team on the post-2015 Development Agenda under the joint leadership of DESA and UNDP to spearhead the post-2015 discussions. He also announced a High-level Panel of Eminent Persons, co-chaired by the President of Indonesia, the President of Liberia and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and appointed a Special Advisor to coordinate the various efforts to make this global process inclusive and participatory.

Consultations are also ongoing among Member States and the civil society on how to make the Agenda truly representative, inclusive and sustainable. Member States have already called for a special event to be held in 2013, which may lead to an initial convergence on the post-2015 development framework.

As we take a closer look at what was achieved under the Millennium Development Goals, we are faced with challenges in the development arena which make

the task of defining a new framework all the more complex. Persistent inequalities, shifting demographics, growing environmental imbalances, and increasingly, issues related to peace and security have not only made headlines in the recent past, but have also impinged on economic growth in many countries around the world.

But in particular, ladies and gentlemen, public governance and accountability deficits at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels have emerged as key areas that constrain sustainable development and consequently a better life for citizens of the world. In the recent Rio +20 Summit, democracy, good governance and the rule of law, at the national and international levels, as well as an enabling environment, were deemed essential for sustainable development. The Rio+ 20 Summit affirmed that to achieve sustainable development, we need institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic.

DESA has a history of supporting Member States in public administration and governance. Our work has identified among other issues, the role of accountable public governance as a crucial element to the post-2015 Development Agenda. However, a fundamental question before us now is how to transform tangible parameters of responsive and accountable public governance into guideposts that can be monitored within the post 2015 development framework.

There is wide recognition that the process of development of the post-2015 Development Agenda must be open and inclusive, and in consultation with all stakeholders. The post-2015 Development Agenda must also abide by the three principles of respect for human rights, equality and sustainability. Member States are also discussing the formulation of sustainable development goals which should be aligned with the post-2015 Development Agenda. To accomplish these objectives, stakeholders have underscored the need for a core set of “development enablers” to guide coherent policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we all know that one such enabler is information technology which is not only cross cutting but also impacts institutions and governance systems, and in doing so, affects public accountability and development outcomes. This year the United Nation’s Annual Ministerial Review to be held during the High-level Segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2013 will focus on “*Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the MDGs.*” Among other issues, it will discuss ways to foster policies to strengthen the contribution of science, technology, innovation and culture in promoting sustainable development.

While we strive toward coherence in global frameworks, we need to be mindful that one size does not fit all. We must be cognizant of the immense wealth of economic, social, geographical, and cultural diversity among nations. Approaches to sustainable development need to take into account the special needs of Africa, as well as Small Island Developing States, landlocked countries and indeed countries in transition and conflict.

We know that all development, ultimately, is local, driven by national governments. While global development frameworks may guide us, it is ultimately the collective efforts of the Member States, the private sector and the civil society that will advance national development agendas.

Ladies and gentlemen, in this context your inputs during this session of the Committee become crucial in defining the attributes of an enabling environment for the post-2015 Development Agenda.

As experts in public administration in your respective countries and as esteemed members of the Committee of Public Administration, you can synergize voices on the ground with the discussions in the halls of the UN.

As you deliberate on public governance policies and processes that influence development outcomes, I would like to indicate a few areas that may require your in-depth consideration and discussion.

First, it is important that the post-2015 Development Agenda be able to determine how to capture linkages between the various dimensions of public governance and development in order to effectively guide the design of the development framework.

Second, we must together deliberate on important questions that are likely to come up such as: what are the pathways to enhance the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda? : in particular, what guiding principles will support transparent, accountable and collaborative governance necessary for development outcomes in national contexts?.

Third, how can public governance build upon the positive synergies between information technology advancements and sustainable development for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 Development Agenda?.

Fourth, what aspects of institutional development and public governance are important for ensuring coherence between the three pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability at the national and global levels?

Let me once again emphasize the unique opportunity you have to advance innovative ideas on how public governance can inform inclusive, people-centered development for the achievement of a development agenda in which the values and principles are truly representative of sustainable development.

I wish you luck in your deliberations over the next few days and look forward to hearing your views.