

Brief Summary paper by the Secretariat on the Call for Inputs Initiative for the 12th Session of CEPA

CEPA Call for Inputs Initiatives

The United Nations Committee of Expert on Public Administration (CEPA), established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in its resolution 2001/45, is designated to support the work of ECOSOC concerning the promotion and development of public administration and governance among Member States in connection with the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a set of time-bound targets agreed on by heads of state in 2000 aiming at unifying, galvanizing and enhancing cooperation among public, private and non-governmental organizations to help the world's poorest people. With great achievement in mobilizing international resources to cut extreme poverty, promote education rates and health, the goals will expire on December 31, 2015. Active debates and comprehensive preparation of the post-2015 development agenda are around the globe.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (Rio+20), countries meanwhile agreed on the need for developing a set of sustainable development goals that are global in nature and universally applicable.¹

The Rio+20 outcome document also acknowledges that democracy, good governance and the rule of law, at the national and international levels are essential for sustainable development as is the need for institutions at all levels that are effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. It calls for attention to various aspects of governance – such as the role of civil society, corruption prevention, ICTs, women's empowerment, rule of law and so on – while leaving the question of prospective goals and targets to the yet-to-be-established Open Working Group (OWG).²

At the moment, there is broad agreement that the post-2015 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) processes should be closely linked and should ultimately converge in one global development agenda beyond 2015 with sustainable development at its core.

From the perspective of public administration, pressure and challenges on transparency, accountability and institutionalization require collaborative efforts from various fields. Therefore, the 12th Session of CEPA, which will convene in April 2013, is going

¹ See General Assembly resolution 66/288

² See, for example, *The Future We Want*, paras. 10, 13, 43-46, 58, 76, 99, 135, 184, 238, 252, 258 and 266.

to generate discussions on the main theme of the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Sub-themes as following are also covered:

(a) making public governance work for the post-2015 development agenda;

(b) stakeholders accountability in public governance for development;

(c) creating an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda.

On 18 March, 2013, the CEPA Secretariat launched the initiative to call for inputs from observers of CEPA, academia, governmental and non-governmental organizations in governance and public administration for consideration at the 12th Session of CEPA. The inputs will be presented to CEPA for consideration in deliberation and reporting to ECOSOC as part of the ongoing discussion on the preparation of the post-2015 development framework in the UN System.

Executive Summary

From 18 March to 7 April, 2013, a total of 48 inputs including 43 contributors were received through emails and 6 other submissions were posted on PAConnect (<http://paconnect.unpan.org>). Uploaded files of each contributor's inputs can be found at <http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/CEPA/12thSession/tabid/1544/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations actively contributed to the initiative. At least eleven valuable inputs from national administrative bodies, including the Commonwealth of the United Kingdom, Information Technology Authority of Oman, National Council for Economy and Labour of Italy, Ministry of Public Service and the Modernization of Administration of Italy, the E-Gov Unit of the Presidency of the Government of Tunisia, and the Ministry of Interior of Turkish Republic, provided insights of the challenges the executive branches faced in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in preparing for the post-2015 development agenda. Local municipal bureaus in Ella, Sri Lanka, and Toronto, Canada, contributed with their specific concerns in tackling public administrative problems in modern cities.

International non-governmental organizations performed proactively in the initiatives with 18 submissions. Other than contributions from inside the UNPAN community, the UN entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Volunteer, the United Nations International Telecommunication Union Liaison Office and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT), the UN Research Institute for Social Development, and UN regional committees such as the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

offered distinctive perceptions about the MDG and the post-2015 agenda on concept clarification, institutionalization, stakeholder engagement and international collaboration.

Along with general discussion on public administration from an international perspective, case studies of Arab regions, China, Mexico, Nigeria, Oman, and Small Island developing states were introduced by the inputs as well. With assessment of these countries' experience in tackling administrative problems, the inputs deliberated on opportunities and challenges in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and preparing for the post-2015 agenda.

Contributions from academia generated inspiring discussions. Observers from 6 universities in different regions, including World Islamic Sciences and Education University, Rutgers University, Alakhawayn University in Ifrane, University of Queensland, University of Vienna, and University of Indonesia provided solid researches on the feasibility of Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, and addressed future challenges.

Content Briefing

Contributors to the Call for Inputs initiative for the 12th Session of CEPA are significantly diverse in professional and cultural background. From governmental organization, non-governmental organizations to research institutions and universities, a variety of expectations and concerns were raised by government officials, civil servants, experts and researchers. Based on the experience they, along with their organizations and institutions, had in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they proposed for intensive communication with citizens, comprehensive cooperation during stakeholders, and adoption of technological innovations in preparing for the post-2015 era.

Expectations of the Post-2015

Comparing to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the challenges for governments are becoming more complex with the predicted peak human population of 9-10 billion in 2050. International cooperation is required to ensure that it fits for purposes, avoids overlaps and the duplication of efforts in public administrations.

It is expected that the international community develop a commonly accepted understanding of core concepts of governance, good governance and government accountability. Governance (defined by the World Bank as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised) varies in organizational structure, mission and vision, and human component. Though there had been widely acknowledged elements in good governance such as participation, consensus oriented action, accountability, transparency, responsibility, effectiveness and efficiency, equality and the rule of law,

clarifications of roles and responsibilities of administrative bodies and cooperative stakeholders in each of these elements are still in need.

It is expected that the post-2015 agenda would promote the communication with citizens and increase public awareness of the post-2015 agenda in the central place so to create an enabling environment for the post-2015 development agenda. Citizen-centric governance should be developed to quickly respond to public needs, to address the needs of the disadvantaged and the marginalized, to increase transparency, and to evolve with time and up-to-date systems and procedures, and to increase transparency in practice. Communication between citizens and the government plays an important role in this aspect and requires the development of multiply channels.

It is also expected that the agenda address specific needs in different sectors of governance such as education, gender and health issues, judicial reforms and local governance. National governments must work with actors in the private and civil society sectors, local municipal branches and agencies to achieve effective sustainable development. Consequently, in tackling problems in different sectors, public governance takes the responsibility of coordination and evaluation, making it crucial to develop standardized procedures and rules to increase its accountability. Meanwhile, with regard to local governance, decentralization of power and localization of policies are advocated by some practitioners.

Opportunities and Challenges

Promising fields identified by the inputs are e-governance in knowledge management and institutionalized cooperative networks in stakeholder engagement.

Knowledge management is increasingly important in bringing together a dynamic and professional community of development practitioners working together across the globe. E-governance, with the shared knowledge, information and data, generate an international platform for discussions and collaborations. Although e-governance alone will not create good governance, it has the potential to enhance good governance. Other enabling elements in utilizing technology innovations in the Internet vary from e-readiness, e-awareness to e-ownership in public governance.

With concern of the informality in cooperation among governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and stakeholders from different sectors, the institutionalization of the cooperative network is proposed by some in the initiative. National strategies that set out a framework with regulatory elements installed can help avoid overlap in efforts in a domestic content. Contributors also proposed a platform with the capacity to engage a larger group of stakeholders to participate in the discussions about the post-2015 agenda.