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Opening remarks
EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Conference Room 1, United Nations, New York
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Madame Chair
Distinguished Members of CEPA,
Mr. Vice-President of ECOSOC,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join the Vice-President of ECOSOC in warmly welcoming you all to the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. I thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for sharing ECOSOC's perspective on key issues before the Committee this week. I also wish to acknowledge and welcome those of you around the world who are following the discussions online.

Every year, the United Nations looks forward to receiving guidance from this Committee on the larger questions of governance and public administration.

Indeed, CEPA is the only body in the ECOSOC system dedicated to institution building in its many forms. Progress in this area is a foundation of progress on all the Sustainable Development Goals. Your contribution is therefore essential.

Excellencies,

The year 2019 is critical to the review and follow-up of 2030 Agenda. In addition to the overall review of progress of all 17 SDGs, a thematic review will be conducted on 5 SDGs, including SDG 16. The in-depth review of SDG 16 at the High-level Political Forum in July presents both an opportunity and a challenge for this Committee.

This year, we look to you for some of the following questions, such as:

- What has been done to achieve the institutional aspects of SDG 16?
- What links can be made, with confidence, between:
 - access to information laws,
 - the adoption of new norms and standards for fiscal transparency,
 - the development of open government and new channels for citizen participation, and

- progress on the targets of the 2030 Agenda in different development contexts?

As you well know, there are no simple answers to these and many other related questions, and most certainly, one size does not fit all.

But as you take stock of progress on institutional aspects of SDG 16, you will help inform a course of action going forward.

Your collective experience, expert knowledge of institutional dynamics, and grasp of longer-term trends will also enable a more in-depth contribution of the United Nations to the wider discourse on governance.

Excellencies,

At this session, you will examine the ECOSOC and HLPF theme of empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. As you know, and as observed at the recent High-Level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs, inequalities have deepened in many parts of the world. Economic and social imbalances have escalated, fueling instability and insecurity. There is some urgency to rebuilding public trust in institutions at all levels in the regions concerned if we are to address these critical issues.

That is why the work of this Committee in elaborating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development is fundamentally important for achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It is encouraging to know that countries can already refer to the principles in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Moving from principles, to practices and results, is the next step. The sustained effort that it will require calls for agile thinking, advanced technical know-how and deep insight into the evolving relationship between government and society. CEPA will need to draw on its extensive networks and engage actively with leading experts in a wide range of technical fields.

I note that you intend to build on your previous work on strengthening capacity in core functional areas of administration, in fiscal management at the national and subnational levels, and in promoting access to justice for all.

In addition, your guidance on public sector workforce issues, public finance, and technology in government get to the heart of institution-building for sustainable development. It will help us move beyond the status quo, to institutions that are responsive to social, political and technological developments in order to place people and planet on course for a better future.

My sincere appreciation to all of you for your hard work in preparing for this session. I wish you very productive deliberations and look forward to your insights and advice.

Thank you.
