

UNITED NATIONS



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**MS. MARIA FRANCESCA SPATOLISANO
ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR POLICY CO-ORDINATION AND INTER-AGENCY AFFAIRS**

Remarks

**VIRTUAL WORKSHOP ON SOUND POLICYMAKING
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**
Innovating Public Governance and Leveraging Digital Technologies
for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

16 February 2021

8:00 to 8:20 a.m.

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. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, 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 Africa.

This workshop follows up on the meeting we held at the end of October 2019 in Pretoria, South Africa, where, together with the APRM and other partners, we discussed the application of the principles of effective governance in African countries.

At that meeting we discussed how to equip institutions to implement the two most powerful instruments of change in Africa: the 2030 Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, and how best to harmonise and create maximum synergies between them.

We concluded that the principles of effective governance can guide us in institutionalizing pathways to sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Sound policymaking as a principle is universally applicable, relevant in all government paradigms regardless of variations in national legal systems.

Indeed, experience around the world shows us that there is no single institutional model which governments should strive to emulate.

Africa is complex and solutions to the challenges of governance on the continent must be responsive to the diverse contexts of African societies.

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

But building strong institutions for implementation of the SDGs is not a matter for governments alone.

Capable, adept and agile institutions involve the whole of government and the whole of society, and this means to involve all levels of government and all relevant stakeholders - parliaments, oversight institutions, civil society - acting in a coherent and cohesive fashion.

Public institutions play a multi-faceted role in advancing sustainable development, including by formulating sound public policy and ensuring efficiency in delivery of essential public services.

Even more so now, that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the role of public institutions in providing essential public services.

The challenges facing the public sector that existed before the pandemic have become more prevalent and prominent. Governments around the world were unprepared for this crisis, and inadequacies in public infrastructure and investment have been laid bare.

The principle we are discussing today, that of sound policymaking, together with the other ten principles enumerated by CEPA and endorsed by ECOSOC in 2018, can promote effective institutions and make a significant contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Achieving the SDGs requires a multi-dimensional and integrated approach; it requires intra- and inter-agency cooperation and collaboration within governments.

Strengthening institutional capacities to effectively respond to deliver on the SDGs requires risk-informed governance and evidence-based decision-making, bridging siloes in policy-making, strategic foresight, regulation of impacts and effective data sharing, among others.

Seen together, they call for public policies to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense.

Distinguished participants,

International and regional institutions have a significant role to play in supporting governments in their efforts to achieve governance and development outcomes, and inter-agency coordination is again crucial for delivery.

We are very pleased at the involvement of the Resident Coordinators and members of the United Nations Country Teams in this initiative.

Resident Coordinators are at the cornerstone of a coherent and effective United Nations development system, delivering integrated support across the SDGs.

Global solidarity and bringing the UN system to work together and to deliver the UN Decade of Action is more crucial now than ever before. DESA stands ready to join these efforts.

Dear Colleagues,

Revisiting the role of public institutions, as you are doing today in this workshop, including those at the local level, is imperative.

And it must be done with a view to reinvigorating their contributions to achieving the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

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