CHAPTER
4

CONCLUSION

The *World Public Sector Report 2023* examined the following questions: (a) How can Governments reshape the relationship with people and other actors to enhance trust and promote the behavioural changes required for more sustainable and peaceful societies? (b) How can Governments assess competing priorities and address difficult policy trade-offs that have emerged since 2020 and may emerge in the future? (c) What assets and innovations could Governments mobilize to transform the public sector and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

This final chapter aims to synthesize key cross-cutting messages coming from the research done by the report team and the contributions of experts in the preceding chapters. Section 4.1 briefly reviews some of the changes that seem to have occurred during and after the pandemic in the expectations of people and societies regarding the objectives and practices of governance. Sections 4.2 to 4.5 summarize lessons from the body of evidence examined in the report, grouped under four headlines: increasing participation and engagement at all levels; changing the modes of operation of the public sector to allow public institutions to simultaneously deal with crises and pursue the SDGs; building the capacity of Governments and non-State actors to move the 2030 Agenda forward and manage crises; and preserving the positive changes that emerged during the pandemic in "normal" times. The chapter concludes with considerations on how the international community should think of the role of public institutions as it embarks on the second half of the 2030 Agenda implementation period. The reader is referred to the tables at the end of the first three chapters of the report for specific recommendations put forward by the experts in their contributions.

4.1 Changed expectations of people and societies with regard to the objectives and practices of governance

In many ways, the pandemic and its negative economic and social impacts acted as a revelator and accelerator of tensions building up in social contracts between people and their Governments. It highlighted profound issues in trust between people and their institutions. In many countries, there appears to have been a significant shift in public perceptions of the goals of governance, particularly with regard to societal values, the role of the State, and inclusion and participation. The report points to several areas that require attention.

The pandemic brought immense hardship to people around the globe, with its most adverse impacts disproportionately affecting individuals and groups that were already disadvantaged. The expectation of fairness within societies is growing—which directly supports calls for renewed social contracts that will enhance people's relationships with their Governments. The present report examines a number of areas where fairness has been at the centre of discussions on how to move forward; these include the administration of justice, taxation systems, public services and, more broadly, respect for human rights both offline and online.

As inequalities continue to rise and the fiscal situation of Governments deteriorates, the legitimacy of the decisions made by Governments about difficult policy trade-offs—and more broadly about long-term societal choices—is increasingly being called into question. The current discussions surrounding austerity policies, for example, are reminiscent of those witnessed in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2007/08—with the difference that the fiscal and policy space in many countries is much more restricted now than it was then. The set of alternatives facing Governments at present also involves apparent trade-offs between short-term imperatives and the longer-term pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, making long-term visions and strategies aligned with the Goals all the more needed. As State-society relations are redefined, building consensus and legitimacy on the paths chosen for SDG implementation is paramount.

In many contexts, citizens are also calling for more accountability from their Governments. Accountability and transparency were challenged during the pandemic, as documented in the *World Public Sector Report 2021*.

The pandemic and other recent crises have served as a reminder that tackling major challenges and achieving societal goals require contributions from all stakeholders. As a precondition for public engagement, Governments need to preserve and expand civic space—the environment that enables people and groups to participate and exercise their civic freedoms and that forms part of the social contract. The steady contraction of civic space was documented even before the pandemic, which only accentuated this trend. The stifling of voice and restrictions on human rights lead to frustration and alienation, undermining the social contract and trust in government. They also preclude people's engagement in the common endeavour to realize the 2030 Agenda, a necessary ingredient for its success.

Digital technologies played a key role during the pandemic, enabling Governments and other stakeholders to continue to provide public services and in many cases transforming the ways services were delivered. For instance, the disruption caused by the lockdowns provided a strong impetus for the digitalization of justice systems in a number of countries. Another crucial role of information technologies during the pandemic was that of platforms for work and collaboration. However, the accelerated shift to digital government has also placed in stark contrast the existing digital divides both within

and across countries. In addition, the digital transformation has highlighted risks to privacy, freedom of expression, information integrity and non-discrimination, and has deepened concerns about surveillance, privacy and data protection, underlining the connection between human rights online and offline. Legal and regulatory frameworks have not kept pace with the rapid development and application of digital technologies. There is an urgent need for proper safeguards and oversight, including within public administration.

Taken together, the trends highlighted here and others that are outside the scope of this report amount to serious challenges to existing social contracts. Adopting a comprehensive approach to rebuilding and strengthening social contracts will better position societies to achieve stronger relationships and social cohesion, greater resilience to crises, and accelerated progress towards the SDGs. Governments alone cannot reshape their relationships with other social actors. However, as a crucial first step towards enhancing public trust, they need to create an enabling environment for strengthened relationships by, for example, promoting transparency, respect for human rights, public engagement, and the exercise of voice. Critically, they also need to demonstrate trust in other actors even as they seek greater trust.

Drawing from the research done for the report and the contributions of experts, the sections that follow examine innovations and changes in practices of governance and public administration that emerged during and after the pandemic in relation to these trends, and their potential to inform strategies to address them.

4.2. Increasing participation and engagement at all levels

The need for Governments to be more inclusive, participatory and responsive to people's needs and aspirations is a thread that runs through the three main chapters of the report. Examples illustrating how enhanced participation and engagement delivered societal benefits during the pandemic, and how they could enhance societal outcomes in the future, cover the full spectrum of participation, which progresses from information to consultation to involvement to collaboration and ultimately to empowerment.*

---

* The IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, developed by the International Association for Public Participation, helps define the public's role in public engagement processes, with the progressive categories reflecting increasing public impact on decisions; for more information on this scale, see https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/communications/11x17_p2_pillars_brochure_20.pdf.

The dissemination of accurate information plays a critical role in fostering trust and enabling participation and engagement. Two critical issues that came to the fore during the pandemic were the rise of misinformation and disinformation and the need for appropriate communication during crises. Combating misinformation and disinformation has been pushed even higher on the international policy agenda in the wake of the events in Ukraine, and efforts to curb them are under way at various levels, including within the United Nations. Efforts to ensure the integrity of information have demonstrated the importance of media literacy and the potential of partnerships between different actors, including the media, fact-checking organizations, other civil society organizations, and Governments. Improving government communication during crises is also an important axis of progress for the future, where more open and inclusive processes are likely to lead to more effective outcomes.

Consultation, collaboration and empowerment are critical principles that Governments need to embrace to build the legitimacy of policy choices. For instance, engaging key stakeholders in budget choices not only helps to build support for those choices, but can also enhance fiscal outcomes and trust in public institutions. The institutionalization of open processes based on transparency, information, participation, inclusiveness and revisability does not happen spontaneously. It requires institutional reform, as well as commitment, time and resources. In vision-setting exercises and in other contexts, public institutions should take care to avoid (real or perceived) tokenism, as this can lead to disenchantment with participation and further estrangement of people from their Governments.

Collaboration between States and non-State stakeholders in the form of co-production and co-creation also offers opportunities, of which the pandemic period offered many examples. As documented in the *World Public Sector Report 2021*, civil society stepped up to support continuity in the delivery of public services, reach out to disadvantaged segments of society, provide legal information and aid, fight misinformation and disinformation, and engage in many other interventions. In some contexts, co-production and hybrid models of service delivery emerged as innovative solutions. Under the right conditions, partnerships between public institutions, the private sector and organized citizens can improve government responsiveness to people's needs and help societies cope with shocks. Countries should evaluate the suitability and adaptability of innovations from the pandemic period within their local contexts, ensuring that the needs of marginalized populations are prioritized in public service design. Partnerships need to be supported by adequate legal frameworks, and their success often hinges on Governments understanding the diverse determinants of the willingness of other actors to engage and providing the right incentives for engagement.

To some degree, empowerment is necessary for all types of participation and engagement. It should come first and

foremost in a renewed ethos for the public sector. Directly deriving from this principle are the need to preserve civic space and the need to increase opportunities for individuals and civil society to be involved in monitoring and oversight, which is key to strengthening government accountability.

The pandemic offers important lessons for preserving civic space going forward. Some Governments applied guardrails for emergency measures, ensuring their necessity, proportionality, legality and non-discriminatory impact and involving oversight institutions in the review of these measures. Public participation was facilitated though measures such as inviting public input and feedback on pandemic-related challenges and policies and including civil society representatives in policymaking committees and parliamentary debates. Protecting freedom of peaceful assembly and safeguarding the right to privacy were important considerations for some Governments. Civil society played a vital role in monitoring and raising awareness of rights violations, forming networks and coalitions, advocating for the removal of criminal sanctions, engaging Indigenous communities, and challenging emergency measures through strategic lawsuits.

4.3 Changing the modes of operation of the public sector to allow public institutions to simultaneously deal with crises and pursue the SDGs

The pandemic and its aftermath have prompted discussions on the need to rethink the modes of operation of the public sector. In the face of the disruptions that occurred in the functioning of public institutions and organizations, in policy choices, and in public service provision, there is a sense that public institutions need to be able to simultaneously anticipate and deal with crises and remain focused on longer-term goals, including the SDGs. This implies a need for better coordination and collaboration across sectors in Government, as well as for rethinking the way public services are delivered, focusing on people, users and beneficiaries rather than on bureaucratic structures and processes.

Making public administration more inclusive

Representation within public institutions influences their relationships with society. A public administration that is a reflection of the public it serves is better able to meet societal needs and gain public trust. In particular, gender equality in public administration remains an unfinished agenda. Adjusting to a "new normal" and refocusing on gender equality in public administration will require simultaneous action on several

fronts. This includes remembering lessons learned prior to the pandemic and reenergizing efforts to adopt and implement proven good practices in the areas of data, transparency, training and mentorship, as well as special measures such as targets and quotas. It is also important to assess the gender implications of changes made during the pandemic in the areas of remote work, hybrid work, attention to work-life balance and mental health and to consolidate and integrate positive changes into future gender equality commitments in public administration. Decision makers must put gender equality at the centre of future crisis recovery efforts and ensure that women are fully integrated into—and are given opportunities to lead—permanent bodies tasked with crisis response and management. These efforts should be part of broader actions by Governments to regain momentum so that Goals 5 and 16 can be achieved by 2030 and should inform other efforts to make public administration more inclusive of all segments of society.

Changing mindsets in public administration

Placing people at the centre of public administration's actions will require changes in the mindsets of public servants, which are necessary to support changes in processes. This was perceived from the very beginning of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda but is now clearer. As public institutions shift from working on the basis of ad hoc, temporary changes put in place during the pandemic to sustained modes of operating, there is an opportunity to think about transforming public administration in a holistic way. For instance, in the justice sector, it is important to organize transformation efforts around people's experience of conflicts or injustice; to involve judges and human rights defenders in the design of solutions; and to embrace legal processes that enable early resolution and create informal approaches to dispute resolution.

Better navigating the trade-offs that arise in SDG implementation

To better navigate the trade-offs that arise in SDG implementation, Governments need to progress on several fronts. Sustainable development challenges cannot be tackled through technocratic solutions. They require compromise on competing policy considerations based on the values and principles reflected in the 2030 Agenda. There is a need to build legitimacy and consensus around policy choices to promote a virtuous circle of trust, policy adherence and effectiveness. Conducting systematic assessments of SDG synergies and trade-offs can help policymakers identify innovative policy solutions and address systemic bottlenecks that undermine the effectiveness of public services in specific contexts. Policy trade-offs should be addressed in an equitable and transparent

manner, and the evidence base used to determine priorities and choices should be openly and transparently communicated. At minimum, the distributional impacts of policy priorities and choices should be communicated by Governments in a transparent way.

SDG prioritization should be transparent, supported by science, and informed by assessments of risks and SDG interactions that take into account their dynamic and contextual nature. There is a need to make science systems in support of SDG implementation more inclusive, equitable and socially relevant by involving a wider range of voices, institutions, sources of knowledge, and approaches to knowledge generation and learning. Systems modelling, scenario analysis, strategic foresight and other tools can support more integrated priority-setting and policymaking and help policymakers navigate the challenges of achieving the SDGs and address technological and environmental transitions. The United Nations' work on integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) provides practical guidance for countries to enhance policy coherence in various SDG sectors. Government capacity was a key determining factor of the effectiveness of countries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the future, development cooperation could play a key role in building such capacities—for example, in national health systems, social protection systems, or crisis response systems. INFFs could serve as a tool to align such international support with national priorities and needs.

Budgets and public financial management are central and powerful tools for the prioritization of policy choices and resource allocation for the SDGs. Budget information helps weigh policy choices. Strengthening public financial management systems is critical for improving the efficiency and equity of public expenditure and for the integrated implementation of the SDGs. This includes monitoring the efficiency of budget execution and ensuring that Governments spend according to their approved budgets. Understanding the impacts of public spending on sustainable development outcomes is crucial to effective SDG implementation. Budget tagging, by linking financial resources in budgets to development goals and targets, enables targeted resource allocation and provides a basis for linking public finance decisions to development outcomes. This approach allows Governments to track and measure the impact of public spending, which can potentially lead to improved societal outcomes. It enables civil society and stakeholders to contribute to budget development, supports monitoring and evaluation, and lends itself to prospective analysis and international comparisons.

Commissioning independent assessments (including through external audits), improving monitoring, and enhancing the quality and availability of data and information are critical for leveraging the potential of these entry points for systemic SDG implementation.

Incorporating risk management in the regular processes of public administration

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of risk management but also revealed weaknesses in risk anticipation and preparedness. Effective risk management can better support systemic SDG implementation by enhancing the integration of risk considerations into SDG coordination and steering structures, investing in risk anticipation capacities, promoting stronger interagency cooperation, and reducing the gap between risk anticipation and actual preparedness. Integrating risk management into the existing priority-setting architecture, such as centres of government, requires addressing gaps in risk management systems and overcoming constraints in priority-setting processes. International cooperation can help Governments advance the role of risk management by, inter alia, setting policy priorities, sharing good practices, closing the impact gap, and facilitating coordination across levels of government.

Fostering innovation in public administration

The pandemic period witnessed occurrences of increased collaboration among public servants and other stakeholders and an accelerated pace of innovation. Innovations and changes that had positive impacts on the effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability of public institutions, for instance, in terms of digital readiness, public procurement, co-production, and staff mobility, should ideally be preserved and consolidated and should inspire further change. This requires proper institutionalization of initially ad hoc initiatives—that is, translating them into the processes and standard operating procedures of public institutions. This has been a long-standing challenge in most countries. With a longer time frame in mind, equipping public institutions with the capacity to anticipate future challenges and manage crises while still performing their regular functions requires a systemic approach based on innovation ecosystems that promote dynamic linkages among multiple organizations, stakeholders and sectors. Very few countries have been able to achieve this.

Managing digital transformation

As mentioned previously, the accelerated shift to digital government since 2020 has provided new opportunities and benefits but has also heightened risks and generated new challenges. Governments have the chance to leverage digital transformation in a way that puts human rights, inclusion and the imperative to leave no one behind at the centre. After promoting "digital only" approaches to digital government, many countries are now moving to approaches that recognize the need for integrated, hybrid models of service delivery

that can offer a seamless experience to all users, particularly those in underserved areas. Governments should adopt "inclusion-by-design" strategies and consider targeted, localized and contextual approaches, as not all excluded groups are confronted with the same barriers.

The rapid acceleration of digitalization has heightened the urgency of regulating digital services and the use of digital technology. Relevant policies should allow innovation to flourish while also protecting the rights of users and ensuring that digital services are secure and equitable, taking into consideration the effect of the growing digital divide on the most vulnerable. Such policies are needed, for example, to safeguard women from the increased online violence they have experienced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adjusting the relationships between levels of government

Collaboration and coordination among different levels of government are crucial for crisis management and response. The pandemic exposed the challenges of fragmentation and highlighted the need to enhance multilevel governance approaches. The changes in the relationships among different levels of government observed during the pandemic can inspire a reconsideration of institutional arrangements along critical dimensions such as the degree of autonomy of different levels of government to act on specific subjects, the allocation of resources in support of the SDGs, collaborative arrangements, and coordination mechanisms, including crisis management mechanisms.

4.4 Building the capacity of Governments and non-State actors to move the 2030 Agenda forward and manage crises

The previous sections highlight various areas where there is potential for Governments to make progress in restoring legitimacy and trust, advancing participation and engagement, making public administration more effective, accountable and responsive, and improving the delivery of public services. Moving forward on these fronts will require enhanced capacity, not only within Governments and public institutions, but also among other actors. The present section illustrates some insights from the report in this regard.

Enhancing the capacity of Governments to plan and prioritize

There are many opportunities for Governments and public institutions to enhance their capacity to plan and prioritize. It is important to train staff in public institutions on how to use available tools to assess trade-offs and synergies, including aspects such as how to produce actionable advice for policymakers. For example, strategic foresight and scenario analysis can be integrated into civil service training and into the curricula of schools of public administration to educate the next generation of public officials and civil servants. Artificial intelligence and computational models can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by analysing the linkages between government expenditure and development outcomes. Capacity-building is also needed in public financial management in a broader sense, including in specific areas such as budget tagging.

Fostering the capacity for innovation in public administration

Much is still being discovered about how to promote innovation in public institutions from a systemic perspective and about the abilities, techniques and assets needed to do it successfully. Common narratives about innovation in the public sector emphasize the need for an enabling environment with appropriate regulation and infrastructure, as well as innovation-oriented organizational cultures, mindsets, capabilities and tools. They also emphasize that public servants need to be properly equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote innovation, particularly in areas such as technology, strategic anticipation, crisis management, adaptability, resilience, and change management. However, the pandemic illustrated that other factors, such as agency and intrinsic motivation among staff and their willingness to meaningfully engage with other actors, also play a crucial role.

During the pandemic, public institutions had to come up with innovative training methods. In South Africa, for instance, health workforce training needed to be provided on online platforms. Governments can further such transformations as an affordable or complementary alternative to in-person training, while also ensuring inclusive access to capacity development opportunities.

Building the capacity of non-State actors

Even though the present report focuses on public institutions, examples from the pandemic period highlight the continued relevance of building the capacities of other stakeholders. This is consistent with the call for increased engagement

and participation, which is at the core of this report. For instance, in order to fully participate in and benefit from vision-building initiatives, stakeholders need to be trained on both the underlying substantive issues and the use of relevant tools–lest participation become tokenistic. At a basic level, education on the SDGs is critical for their achievement, and initiatives at the school and university levels can contribute to operationalizing sustainable development. Increasing the digital literacy and media literacy of the general public–starting early, ideally within schools–is an example of the kind of foundational capacity development that should accompany and support broader capacity-building efforts undertaken by Governments.

Sharing experiences and practices

The exchange of experiences and practices across countries can help address the knowledge gap on what has worked and what should be avoided in the future. Transnational professional or civil-society-led networks are valuable resources for supporting the integrated implementation of the SDGs. They can contribute to capacity-building and collaboration at the individual, organizational, and enabling environment levels. Global and regional networks can also promote the dissemination and uptake of analytical tools and models to support policy coherence and integration and encourage their practical use.

4.5 Moving from crisis to normal: preserving and leveraging the positive changes and innovations that emerged during the pandemic

The pandemic and other recent crises have prompted institutional changes that have had positive impacts on SDG progress, showing how crises can also be windows of opportunity. Yet in many areas, there is a risk of policies and institutional changes with a positive impact being abandoned once crises are over as part of the drive to "move back to normal"–especially if their impacts are not carefully assessed. For instance, some of the new workplace policies for public employees had positive impacts on gender equality, but these impacts may not have been recognized by managers or decision makers or may not be considered important as they prioritize a return to the status quo ante. Similarly, while more effective ways for different levels of government to collaborate were experimented with during the pandemic, they may lose traction and be abandoned as the end of the emergency compels all actors to fall back to prescribed or traditional ways of working. This underscores the importance of evaluation to assess the performance of institutional innovations, enable course corrections, and focus efforts on effective practices in public administration.

The same applies to situations where rapid, positive change was achieved largely through collective mobilization, collaboration stemming from a renewed sense of common purpose, and the intrinsic motivation of individuals. This reflects key differences between normal times and crises. In non-emergency conditions, public servants may not be allowed to experiment with or learn from unsuccessful attempts at innovation or to understand how to manage the risks associated with failure. They may also lack the optimism, influence and motivation necessary to explore new ways of delivering public services and capitalizing on data and tools that can foster innovation. All this can drastically change during crises. During the pandemic, public sector managers and staff often departed from general preconceptions and did not wait for all the traditionally recognized enabling elements to be in place to innovate.

The question thus arises of how to preserve positive changes so that they continue to benefit society in normal times. As reflected in the examples included in the report, fostering transformation and innovation requires intentional actions at different levels–actions that involve individuals (including staff of public entities and their partners), organizations, and institutions, up to the enabling environment. As emphasized above, the capacity of public institutions to institutionalize change in a durable way, translating it into changes in standard operating procedures of public administration, is crucial, as is the ability of public organizations to deal with uncertainty and risk. So are the mindsets and attitudes of public servants and those with whom they interact. Going forward, creating a renewed sense of purpose within public institutions and public administration–one that is shared with stakeholders and put at the service of a genuine commitment to participation and engagement–will be necessary.

4.6 Looking forward: Can the lessons from the pandemic inform institutional change to better support the realization of the SDGs?

Looking forward, what are the lessons from the pandemic period in terms of how institutions at the national level could be transformed to support the achievement of the SDGs and make societies more resilient to crises? The role played by Governments in COVID-19 responses has reinforced the legitimacy and centrality of the State as a societal actor–a 180-degree turn away from the minimalist conceptions of the role of the State that had dominated the mainstream economic discourse since the mid-1980s. At the same time, the current social, economic and environmental challenges are immense, and the level of trust between public institutions and those they serve is low. This conjunction offers a clear

opportunity to rethink how public institutions work for people and how they can best support progress on the 2030 Agenda. Such conversations should be held at the national level but also at the international level when appropriate, given the commonality and interdependence of challenges across countries in many areas. The lessons from the pandemic could also help Governments manage other emergencies, such as the climate emergency, which require long-term transformations in policies and drastic policy choices, as well as putting rights and justice considerations at the centre of policy decisions.

Broadly speaking, institutions at all levels need to become more inclusive and responsive. This encompasses empowering different segments of society, including women and youth, to meaningfully contribute to the creation of shared visions and strategies for sustainable development, including participating in key policy choices. There must be a sustained and integrated focus on human rights, including those of future generations, with more attention given to how changes in institutional design and rapid technological progress may impact them, both in times of crises and in "normal" times.

To support faster progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, institutions need to be better equipped—starting with adequate funding and human resources. Key areas for consideration include the capacity of the public sector to identify and manage synergies and trade-offs among the SDGs, to better integrate uncertainty and risk into key processes, to manage digital transformation, to better use budget and public financial management in support of informed policy choices, and to foster and institutionalize innovation both in the internal processes of public organizations and at the interface with people in service delivery. The changes required are not limited to those of a technical nature; they include changes in the mindsets of public servants and the norms of public institutions and specific organizations to genuinely value the empowerment of other actors, engage in co-production and effectively manage participation; to put gender equality and human rights at the centre of policy and institutional design; and to elevate the principle of leaving no one behind as a central tenet of public service.

The examples featured in the report provide glimpses of fast and sometimes radical change (in the health and justice sectors, for instance), but they also offer insights into persistent obstacles and challenges that often precluded more than incremental changes during the pandemic (in areas such as the preservation of civic space, the engagement of non-State actors in policymaking, and the fight against misinformation and disinformation). While a comprehensive assessment across sectors was not the objective of this report, the general picture is not that of a broad, systemic transformation of public institutions that could help facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many of the challenges highlighted in this report are therefore likely to remain relevant in the coming years. More research could be devoted to systematically taking stock of which sectors, policy areas and types of institutions have experienced more drastic or disruptive changes, and to assessing the potential for those changes to positively impact progress on all the SDGs. Such assessments should be carried out at the national level, as circumstances and contexts vary widely across countries, and also at the international level, as rapid changes in some sectors—such as new mechanisms for cooperation during health emergencies or new ways of addressing misinformation and disinformation—may impact international relations.

Some of the positive changes that emerged during the pandemic period may not be sustained going forward as policies and processes get pulled back to pre-pandemic "default" positions. The intrinsic motivation of public servants, civil society and individuals may in some cases have been the determining factor behind many of the positive changes driven by the pandemic. Whether and how such motivation can be sustained post-pandemic should now be of key concern to Governments.

Many of the issues examined in this report are currently being addressed within the United Nations, some through intergovernmental processes set in motion as a follow-up to the Secretary-General's report, *Our Common Agenda*. A number of the expert contributions in this report highlight the high expectations attached to United Nations-led processes aimed at addressing these issues, including the SDG Summit, the Global Digital Compact, the Declaration on Future Generations, and the Summit of the Future. This is a great opportunity for the United Nations, as it testifies to the commitment of non-State actors to contribute to these processes and enrich them, and more broadly to the faith that is still placed in the multilateral system. It is also a reminder of the importance of securing meaningful outcomes to these processes.