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Strategies for integrated action to achieve poverty eradication: implications for public institutions

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**Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity while leaving no one behind:
Implications for public administration**

This conference room paper was prepared by the Secretariat. It aims to support the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in formulating its input to the 2017 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) on the theme of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

A. Introduction

1. The annual theme of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) is "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". The 2017 HLPF, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, will also discuss a set of Goals and their relevant interlinkages with other Goals, representing the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Goals to be reviewed in 2017 are Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 2 on hunger, Goal 3 on health and well-being, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, and Goal 14 on oceans.

2. The corresponding 2017 theme of the Economic and Social Council is "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges".

3. It is recommended that the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) -- a subsidiary body of the Council -- provides an input to the HLPF, in view of the important role of public administrations in the national implementation, monitoring and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The HLPF is the overarching platform for reviewing SDGs implementation so it is important for CEPA to have some visibility in the Forum.

B. Theory and practices of public administration in poverty eradication

4. Opinion polls worldwide have shown that poverty is judged to be the most severe global development challenge for people in wealthy countries as well as in poor countries[1].

5. The theme of poverty eradication has emerged as a main overarching axle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, cutting across all 17 Goals and 169 Targets. Goal 1 states explicitly to "end poverty in all its forms everywhere" (see Box 1), while its interlinking and interdependence across 16 other Goals are also underscored[2]. Target 1 aims to eradicate "by 2030, extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day". This measure of extreme poverty was set by the World Bank and it has since been revised to $1.90[3]. Earlier in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed for halving extreme poverty, defined then as less than $1 a day, and this target was reached five years earlier in 2010[4].

Box 1: Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

1.a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for

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[1] Michiel S. de Vries, 2016. "Understanding public administration, chapter 8 - How can public policies solve social problems?"

[2] UN, 2015. General Assembly resolution GA 70/1, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

[3] World Bank, 2015. "The international poverty line has just been raised to $1.90 a day, but global poverty is basically unchanged. How is that even possible?"; accessible online at http://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/international-poverty-line-has-just-been-raised-190-day-global-poverty-basically-unchanged-how-even

[4] UN, 2000. The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015.

developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

1.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

6. Poverty takes many forms and has multiple facets and dimensions. Its implications go beyond mere income measurements and include a lack of basic access to services, *inter alia*, in health, education, housing and public security, as well as hunger and malnutrition.

7. Poverty is often associated with other conditions leading to discrimination such as being an indigenous person or a woman with a disability. Some factors such as barriers to accessing to microcredit or employment can lead to viscous circles preventing people from escaping from poverty. There is also an inter-generational reproduction of poverty. The affected individuals and populations also have feeble or no voice at all in policy processes, neither in design, formulation nor implementation. Individuals may be poor not just because a lack of economic means, but because they cannot participate in society and are excluded from decision-making[5].

8. An illustration of the many dimensions of poverty is the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which measures the lack of access to health, education and other basic necessities such as cooking fuel, electricity, water and hygiene, among other things[6]. The MPI showed that 1.6 billion of the world's population are poor and 736 million are destitute with no access to adequate food and education. Ninety-one per cent live in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Seventy-two per cent of those living in fragile states are multi-dimensionally poor[7]. Nepal and South Sudan, for instance, are respectively classified at the 29th and the 90th percentiles by the Multidimensional Poverty Index even though they are both classified as low income countries. Clearly, populations earning the same level of income live in many different situations[8].

9. As poverty is associated with a lack of access to basic public services[9], public administrations need to ensure that healthcare, education, employment, water and sanitation are available, accessible, culturally acceptable and of adequate quality to all society groups without discrimination[10].

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[5] Michiel S. de Vries, 2016. "Understanding public administration, chapter 8 - How can public policies solve social problems?"

[6] Note: Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was developed in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI)

[7] Ibid.

[8] Alkire, S. Presentation at the United Nations Headquarters on Multidimensional Poverty Index on 9 March 2017.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Center for Economic and Social Rights, "From disparity to dignity, tackling economic inequality through the sustainable development goals", Human Rights Policy Relief

Poverty eradication and leaving on one behind as a principle of public administration

10. In the theory and practice of public administration, scholars and practitioners have long emphasized management science, policy efficiency, rationality and making economical decisions[11]. It was only around 1960s that the new public administration movement placed social equity as a third pillar of public administration in addition to efficiency and economy[12]. One recognised definition of social equity is "*the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract; and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy; and the commitment to promote fairness, justice and equity in the formation of public policy[13]*.

11. In 2016, CEPA recognised that "leaving no one behind", as a core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, should guide public administrations in delivering on all their functions, along with the need for effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability[14].

12. Despite the important notion of social equity in guiding public administrators, challenges often arise in finding a balance between social equity and the other two pillars of economy and efficiency. For example, although the development purpose of issuing personal identification is inclusive in nature, an ill-designed approach or lack of a robust legal enabling environment, various factors such as cost, distance and time to register, discriminatory practices can undermine the poorest and most vulnerable.

13. One can reasonably deduce that the meaning of social equity in public administration is in the context of "fairness" in governmental action. Fairness is based on moral values and therefore different societies, institutions and individuals can have different understandings. While economy, efficiency, and effectiveness deal with 'how' part of the government, equity deals with 'for whom' government operates. In summary, one can deduce that social equity fundamentally is about creating a "level playing field" or equality of opportunity.

14. In addressing social equity, alongside the determined vision of eradicating poverty, the 2030 Agenda is also guided by the principle of leaving no one behind. The nexus of eradicating poverty, promoting prosperity and leaving no one behind can be seen as a cross-cutting framework emphasizing what effective, inclusive and accountable public administration should be.

15. The principle to leave no one behind refers to ensuring that the SDGs and targets are achieved for all segments of society. It calls for paying special attention to specific groups such as children, youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, women, older persons,

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[11] George Frederickson, 1990.
[12] George Frederickson, 2005.
[13] National Academy of Public Administration, 2000
[14] CEPA, 2016. Contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons, migrants, slum dwellers and other people living in extreme poverty.

16. Discrimination is one key dimension in explaining why people are being left behind. The poorest people are also being left behind and frequently suffer from some form of discrimination. The principle of leaving no one behind is thus ingrained within the principles of *social justice* defined as "full participation in society and the balancing of benefits and burdens by all citizens, resulting in equitable living and a just ordering of society"[15].

17. In essence, leaving on one behind calls for reaching *all* people, including the excluded, marginalized, ostracized, subordinated, and the disadvantaged as well as the vulnerable groups.

C. Implications in policy actions

18. In delivering on their functions, public administrations should be guided by the core principle of leaving no one behind, along with the need for effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability[16]. Public institutions should drive integrated efforts to ensure equitable access to services and information for everyone without biases or discrimination. They should aim to lift people out of poverty and deprivation[17].

19. The aim of poverty eradication in all its forms and leaving no one behind is directly linked with effective and accountable public institutions, policies and public services. This is a lesson learned from policy processes accumulated through the era of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite significant advances in maternal health, child mortality, primary and secondary education attainment, the MDGs were not as successful in realising inclusive development having eschewed an explicit focus on within- and across-country imbalances. A consequence of this lapse has been apparent in the form of pockets of poverty amid prosperity and persisting gaps between the haves and have-nots[18]. The SDGs were formulated in part as a response to this crucial shortcoming of the MDGs -- by both taking a bird's eye view on the developmental needs of *all* people while at the same time zooming in on the specific needs of those *furthest left behind*[19]. The SDGs' attention to inequalities, marginalized groups and to leaving no one behind marks a turning point.

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[15] Buettner-Schmidt K. & Lobo M.L. (2012). Social justice: a concept analysis, 954.

[16] CEPA, 2016. 15th Session of UN Committee of Expert on Public Administration, "Contribution to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)", 15 April 2016.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Note: A recent report prepared by Credit Suisse shows that just 0.7 percent of the world's adult population, i.e., 33 million millionaires, owns 46 percent of the world's wealth, while the bottom 73 percent, i.e., about 3.5 billion adults, have less than $10,000 each, which accounts for 2.4 percent of global wealth. For more, see Suisse Global Wealth Report 2016 available at https://www.credit-suisse.com/us/en/about-us/research/research-institute/global-wealth-report.html

[19] Mangubhai 2015, Gorna et al. 2015

20. The complexity of globalisation and international development in general has implication for poverty eradication and leaving no one behind. Development is strewn with several uncertainties and challenges today ranging from economic volatility, stagnant growth, rise in unemployment especially for youth in many countries, to increasing inequalities, squeezed middle class, chronic poverty and famine, streams of migrants, displaced peoples, refugees, and aging [20]. There are also other challenges spurred by climate change and environmental degradation as already apparent in sea-level rises and other natural disasters. The multiplicity and the intertwining nature of such challenges necessitate an integrated and holistic approach to poverty eradication and promoting prosperity in achieving sustainable development.

Integrated plans and policies

21. The SDGs are closely interlinked and interrelated through the targets. Some targets support other targets. Some are preconditions for achieving other targets. These are also some trade-offs.

22. The 2030 Agenda recognises that eradicating poverty requires integrated policies. Progress needs to be achieved on all the SDGs in an integrated way if we are to durably eradicate poverty. Ensuring that macroeconomic, social and environmental policies are interrelated, building on synergies and address trade-offs, will enhance prospects for eradicating poverty[21].

23. CEPA has in the past advocated for pro-poor strategies and national-level redistributive policies for specific social objectives[22]. Making governance and public administration more responsive, efficient and effective in implementing poverty alleviation initiatives was also reiterated[23]. A pro-poor orientation to both the analytical framework of public administration and the policy-making processes would entail significant governance innovations to guarantee, among others, peoples' participation in the decision-making processes of the government, as a norm[24].

24. Assessing poverty and prosperity beyond wealth and material comfort to encompass social, moral, political, policy and environmental dimensions, sends a strong message to public administrators.

25. Some integrated policies can be universal in nature, benefitting all people, while others may be more targeted such as policies of affirmative action. For the latter, differentiated criterion such as specific sets of vulnerabilities or geographical variables, can be used to determine the target recipients of intended services[25]. For example, specific policies can apply to only young

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[20] Report by the Resolution Foundation, 2016. *Examining an Elephant: Globalization and the Lower Middle Class of the Rich World*. London. Available at http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2016/09/Examining-an-elephant.pdf

[21] UN DESA, Leaving No One Behind, Progress Towards Achieving Socially-Inclusive Development, page 129

[22] CEPA, 2007. 6th Session of CEPA.

[23] Ibid.

[24] UN DESA, 2005. Citizen Participation and Pro-poor Budgeting.

[25] UNDP, 2015

women or those with certain disabilities or they could be valid for those dwelling in certain regions or localities. Social protection policies aiming to promote social integration and tackle discrimination should be designed to achieve real change and specific outcomes, and monitored through a robust statistical system that can make disaggregated data available on various marginalised segments of society[26].

26. Integrated policies can be implemented at different levels of administration -- local, national, regional, or global. They can be imbedded in decrees, legislation, acts, rules or regulations. Depending on the context, they can be incorporated in the national constitutions as was done Canada, Norway, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, and Malaysia.

27. Pursuing poverty eradication in an integrated fashion requires a whole-of-government approach. Each part of government should work towards the common objective of poverty eradication. Policy instruments in all areas, therefore, need to be carefully selected to ensure that the final outcome does not exclude some segments of the society. These instruments may vary according to "the level of government (national or regional/local), the nature of the organization that develops the policy, its culture, its type of management and organization; the preferences, capabilities and motivation of policy makers". Nonetheless, in order to succeed, poverty eradication must be an objective across policies. They should also be inclusive and innovative, which brings back some traditional issues of public administration.

28. Examples of anti-poverty measures include disability services across an individual's lifecycle, mobile schools, and subsidized transport services to excluded groups in remote areas, community-driven development projects, capacity building for public servants including cultural competencies training and land redistribution. Critical policies include universal access to health services, social protection schemes, public security, laws of equal opportunities in employment, in credit markets, in housing and in education, subsidized child care for women's job security, equal pay for women's empowerment and women's human rights, and creation of electronic identity databases (See Box 2). Well-designed social policies can certainly enhance macroeconomic growth through, for example, investments in human resources development and redistributive measures that increase productivity and resilience to climate change and adaptation for present and future generations alike.

29. In principle and in practice, information communication technologies (ICTs) like digital identities address poverty eradication and leaving no one behind by empowering citizens to own identities, gain greater awareness of their legal rights and have access to services, and to

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[26] Note: Social protection policies may include measures such as transfers and benefits, in cash or in kind, designed to reduce poverty, provide income security and protect against a range of risks, vulnerabilities and lifecycle contingencies including unemployment, old age, childhood, maternity or sickness

make more informed choices and exercise their voice in participatory community decision-making[27].

Box 2: *Example of integrated tool: digital identities and information communication technologies*

In many cases, an important first step in helping disadvantaged segments of the population is to identify them in the first place. There are an estimated 1.5 billion people in the world who do not have an officially recognized documentation to prove their identity[28], and an estimated 2.5 billion are excluded from access to any banking or financing services such as savings accounts or monetary loans[29]. SDG target 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030.

Standardized identification systems present opportunities to meet SDG target 16.9, as well as serve as a prerequisite to inclusive distribution and efficiency of services like education, healthcare, and finance. Many countries have increasingly turned to digital identification systems and leveraged them with other services to create tools that help the marginalized members of society climb out of poverty.

In India, the digital ID initiative "Aadhaar", a biometric identification system, is now the largest biometric ID system in the world, boasting over 1.1 billion enrolled members and over 99% of India's population older than the age of 18. The success of the Aadhaar program has helped catalyse the rise of micro-financing institutions of which there are over 150 throughout India that have given loans to over 37 million Indians, 97% of whom are women30. These cases have demonstrated the successful establishment and lever of digital ID systems to improve accountability, efficiency, and equality for women.

Similar initiative is also seen in Brazil, where 36 million Brazilians have been lifted out of extreme poverty and a significant part of this achievement is credited to the Bolsa Familia program, that disburse monthly stipends directly to government-issued Citizen Cards31. Women account for over 90% of the beneficiaries and qualitative studies have highlighted how the regular cash transfers from the program have helped promote the dignity and autonomy of the poor.

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[27] UN DESA. Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Development – Report on the World Social Situation 2016

[28] http://blogs.worldbank.org/ic4d/making-invisible-billion-more-visible-power-digital-identification

[29] https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=037082122068090002079098072005099005123025053058 02

[30] http://sa-dhan.net/Adls/Microfinance/Sector%20Reports/The%20Bharat%20Microfinance%20Report%202015-Web%20version.pdf

[31]

http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20754490~menuPK:141310~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html

Policy integration and institutional arrangements

30. Achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda and its principle to leave no one behind thus requires institutions which are effective, efficient and well-resourced and that are capable of delivering public services in an accountable and inclusive manner. The institutions have to guide the process of prioritizing the goals and targets related to poverty eradication and to ensure integrated implementations[32]. They need to build awareness internally within the public administration and beyond; applying inclusive and multi-stakeholder approaches to poverty eradication; tailoring the related SDGs to national and sub-national contexts; creating horizontal policy coherence and integration by breaking the institutional silos; budgeting for the future; monitoring, reporting and ensuring accountability; and assessing risk and fostering adaptability.

31. Institutional frameworks[33] should also foster close linkages between institutions in sustainable development. Its success requires the proactive design of a multidimensional programme to eradicate poverty, promoted through transformational leadership. It requires ensuring that measures and policies adopted in one area do not undermine the objective of poverty eradication. For instance, macroeconomic policies or environmental policies need to be screened to ensure that they do not have a negative compact on the poorest and most vulnerable people.

32. In pursuit of the SDGs, some countries have been creating inter-ministerial committees or commissions led or coordinated by the head of State or government. Some countries are using the leadership of key ministries with cross-cutting influence, such as finance ministries or other ministries depending on the country context[34]. The impact of coordination arrangements is likely to be greatest where the lead agency yields political clout and influence, instead of remaining in the realm of administration/public servants[35]. In order to combat poverty effectively, national and local governments need to have institutional frameworks that support integrated responses at both the national level and sub-national levels.

33. Policy integration and whole-of-government approaches can be undermined not only by institutional set-ups but also by dynamics and ways of working within public administration[36]. Pursuing integrated policies to eradicate poverty thus requires instilling changes in the way public servants work. They must make coordination and consultation a routine part of their work, recognising poverty eradiation and leave no one behind as their ultimate objective.

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[32]UNDG Guidance Note
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/9478undgguidancenote.pdf
[33] OECD, 2010 Making Reform Happens- Lessons from OECD Countries (Modernizing government pg 238)
[34] UN DESA Issue Brief, 2016. "Overview of institutional arrangements for implementing the 2030 Agenda at national level"
[35] Ibid.
[36] Michiel S. de Vries, 2016. "Understanding public administration, chapter 8 - How can public policies solve social problems?"

Governments need to create an environment where leadership and innovation can flourish at all levels.

Accountability and review process

34. In eradicating poverty and leaving on one behind, not only do public administrations need to be responsive to the needs of all strata of the population, they also need to be held accountable for the impact of their work including on the poorest and most vulnerable.

35. Accountability mechanisms need to be inclusive and to engage all segments of the population[37]. The lack of responsiveness and accountability of government institutions towards certain individuals and groups, leads to potential non-engagement of these groups. This can translate to backlash including a lack of trust in public institutions and negative perception on their legitimacy. Given particular social, political or other circumstances, it can even degenerate into various forms of alienation and social unrest. Hence, strengthening public accountability and national human rights institutions and ensuring effective enforcement of civil rights and liberties for all, including the poorest and most vulnerable, in keeping with the SDGs, is critical to tackling inequality[38].

36. The value of public services is increased when people give their feedback -- helping to identify obstacles, calling attention to remaining gaps, and responding to needs. People and non-governmental organisations can objectively report on the realities of the services they access. It is important that the criteria and indicators based on which governments and public servants are held accountable reflect the concern for poverty eradiation.

37. It is also critical to ensure that the voices of those at greatest risk of being left behind are heard during the review of progress on the SDGs, notably whether sufficient efforts are being made by public institutions to eradicate poverty.

38. Independent audit institutions such as supreme audit institutions (SAIs) can help review plans and audit SDGs implementation[39] while also engaging with the public. This requires enhanced capacities to conduct performance assessments in addition to financial audit as well as adequate capacity and mechanisms to interact with external actors, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

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[37] CEPA, 2016. Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

[38] Center for Economic and Social Rights, From disparity to dignity, tackling economic inequality through the sustainable development goals, Human Rights Policy Relief, page 35

[39] CEPA, 2016. Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

39. To this end, the UN Statistical Commission adopted the global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda[40]. These include indicators on government spending, especially for women, the poorest and vulnerable groups, in sectors that provide essential services. They also include indicators that, when tracked, would provide metadata on the composition and number of people in danger of being left behind in development efforts. Other indicators can capture partnerships and financing for development, including international development cooperation. What is needed is for public administrations to "localize" these indicators – and mainstream them into their development objectives. This would improve both ownership and effectiveness of their role in eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind[41].

Ensuring engagement of civil society and participation of all

40. While many diverse actors work to implement the 2030 Agenda and eradicate poverty, the voices and perspectives of those working at the grassroots and local level are central to ensuring that real change is made. The vulnerable groups themselves should be engaged not just to be heard, but to be change agents for building community resilience and meeting the SDGs. The choice of policy instruments will also partly be determined by "whether or not the process is transparent and stakeholders are involved" [42]. Integrated policies for leaving no one behind will only thrive if they are designed and implemented in a bottom-up fashion together with the people, communities and with all relevant government agencies and entities aligning and cooperating with each other to respond to people's needs effectively.

41. Public engagement also enhances the capacity of policy-makers to frame public needs and formulate policies which address different values and interests. These needs may also be felt differently by stakeholders who may even have dissimilar or competing interests[43]. Providing equal opportunities of public engagement to women and men without any form of discrimination is critical in the attainment of the SDGs.

42. In view of this, SDG Target 16.7 calls for ensuring inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. As a precondition, public engagement requires access to information and the protection of fundamental freedoms, as highlighted in Target 16.10. Information needs to be accessed by individuals without biases or discrimination and to be presented in a way that is understandable by all. This requires removing cost, language and gender bias, among others. Equitable access to information on public policies must be ensured for the poorest and vulnerable groups.

43. This requires a mix of instruments and approaches. Communities and NGOs need to be engaged in a proactive manner.

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[40] UN, 2017. http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2017/03/statistical-commission-adds-last-piece-full-implementation-sdgs/

[41] UN, High-level Expert Group Meeting on Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development

[42] Michiel S. de Vries, 2016. "Understanding public administration, chapter 8 - How can public policies solve social problems?"

[43] Ibidem.

44. Public institutions can also complement face-to-face channels with digital techniques, such as e-participation[44], to carry out complex discussions with large numbers of people and in geographical areas, and gather a diverse range of views and interests. These techniques have been used by countries for instance in the public health sector to create a digital space that allows participants to identify key health issues, bringing together both offline and online conversations, and promoting electronic deliberation and dialogue to develop these issues and communicate them back to government[45].

Ensuring public services reach the poorest and most vulnerable

45. The lack of access to public services for the poorest and the vulnerable or disadvantaged people may be either intentional, through exclusionary policies and laws, or unintentional, due to societal power dynamics, or one-size-fits-all policies. This gap in coverage by government can also be attributed to a lack of access to the consultative process for vulnerable groups, coupled with a lack of awareness of needs on part of the government[46].

46. However, governments including the local authorities, may not always be well-placed to ensure the affordable access to public services and public participation.

47. To that end, engaging with these groups through multi-stakeholder partnerships, that include the private sector and civil society organisations, may be required[47].

48. Civil society organisations can act as "government surrogates and proxies", by providing basic services to them where government is too weak or too far from people. Civil society organizations can also provide an invaluable conduit for communication, providing accurate information regarding the situation facing vulnerable populations – and their needs[48].

49. There is a wealth of examples of proactive sub-national public administrations creatively introducing solutions to development issues via engaging with businesses, and global and local non-governmental organisations[49]. In addition, increased autonomy and capacity coincides with more specific, bottom-up projects that cater to local priorities as opposed to national master strategies. With increased urbanization and population growth, national leaders are more willing to deconcentrate, delegate, and devolve more authority and responsibility to high-population regions and cities. This is a function of the understanding that local government, with connection to local non-government entities, is more attuned to the need of populations[50].

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[44] UN E-Government Survey, 2016

[45] CEPA, Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

[46] Leaving No One Behind: An Agenda For Equity

[47] UN DESA, 2016. Background Note On Challenges For Institutions In Ensuring That No One Is Left Behind

[48] Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Making them work for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

[49] Leave No One Behind Proposal for Inclusion as a Principle of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

[50] World Bank. What is Decentralization?

50. Public administrations at all levels could contribute to the formulation of multistakeholder partnerships in several ways – by setting objectives, coordinating amongst stakeholders, evaluating progress, and providing administrative support. These activities require political and legislative authority, and fiscal ability. Their standard success rate depends on the size of the bureaucracy and its efficiency, its political and fiscal autonomy, and of course, institutional memory of previous partnerships that have worked. At sub-national levels, this becomes an even more obvious issue. Historical factors affecting levels of governments' autonomy include the political dynamic within the country, whether there is a lack of trust in central government, whether different groups feel disenfranchised, and the overall history of governance. Capacities are needed to establish mechanisms to foster partnerships with civil society, the business community and other major groups to forge alliances for the successful implementation of inclusive and accountable 2030 Agenda national poverty reduction implementation plans.

Integrating policy actions of local authorities

51. Local governments have a critical role in poverty eradication and leaving no one behind, notably because many public services are delivered at the local level.

52. A key success factor of efforts of local authorities is ensuring the continuity and sustainability of outcomes. Very often, short-term projects are preferred because they may have a quick noticeable impact. But gains in development, especially in eradicating poverty, usually manifest over the long term. There is also a danger that strategies and the priorities given to poverty eradication change after elections. While the methods of achieving the goals may change, the targets and indicators are guiding points for public institutions[51]. This requires actions to mobilize and sensitize all parts of the State, parliaments and civil servants about the SDGs and the importance of poverty eradication.

53. Although it has been widely accepted that the implementation of SDGs will be taken at the local level, the statistical capacity of local government agencies are not seen as sufficient to achieve new goals in complex environment. Many of national surveys do not include information at local level. One research shows that the national census should include demographic and health information disaggregated to the street level, while in practice, local authorities do not have access to the data they need for SDG implementation, especially in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

54. The growing need to review mechanisms for engaging people in decision-making has been highlighted in recent public debates on sustainable development[52]. Local governments can be transparent and accountable only when they are truly and meaningfully inclusive. They are not

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[51] Building the Knowledge Base on Triangular Co-operation
[52] CLGF, 2016. Article on Need to promote inclusivity in local government says CLGF SG, 13 October 2016, available at : http://www.clgf.org.uk/whats-new/news/need-to-promote-inclusivity-in-local-government-says-clgf-sg/

inclusive unless active steps are taken to include the marginalised sectors of community in the planning and delivery of public services[53]. Strengthening inclusiveness of vulnerable groups requires improving public space for engagement particularly at the local level[54]. Various approaches need to be undertaken to facilitate effective community engagement.

D. Implications in the public sector itself

55. Public sector leaders in different regions of the world are developing and implementing national plans and strategies for realizing the SDGs, including eradicating poverty and inequality, and to review progress in these areas. How do we ensure public administrations across all levels have the necessary autonomy and capacities to initiate and implement policies and partnerships to leave no one behind and eradicate poverty? How do we address capacity gaps in the public sector?

56. The question of public administration autonomy and capacity in and of itself has no straightforward solution. The huge diversity in systems of government, institutional strengths and capacities, and decentralization, renders a comparative and universal approach impossible.

Public sector leadership

57. Implementing the SDGs and eradicating poverty requires leadership capacity for developing integrated multi-disciplinary responses to problems in complex and increasingly volatile contexts[55]. The principle on leaving no one behind will need to cut across all ministries and agencies. For this to happen, the highest level of government leadership has to be committed and to drive the implementation of this principle.

58. Poverty has also been seen by some as a "leadership issue pointing to the inefficient and wrong way political leaders in the countries, in which poverty is prevalent, spend their resources"[56]. Leadership and vision is thus critical to guide and sustain poverty eradication efforts and build the capacity at the institutional level. A strong leadership is responsible for identifying current problems, mapping solution, and leading organizational and institutional transformation.

59. Eradicating poverty requires an explicit and direct focus on protecting and empowering vulnerable groups, the disadvantaged, and those that are at risk of falling in the ranks of the excluded. Right-based antipoverty policies should target primarily the furthest left behind. The highest level of public leadership has to ensure capacity development for public sector officials to implement it at all levels of government and all stages of the policy cycle. Leadership

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[53] Ibidem

[54] Ibidem

[55] CEPA, 2016. Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

[56] Understanding public administration. How can public policies solve social problems.

capacity is needed to engage all parts of the government to support multilevel policies to address the needs of population groups facing multiple types of discrimination, e.g. interaction of ethnicity, rural residence, indigenous, gender, disability or migratory status[57].

60. Openness from leadership to receive messages from outside the public sector and seek collective solutions is also essential. This requires collaboration and consultations across organizations and with non-governmental organisations and other actors in helping the vulnerable people coupled with greater accountability and participatory monitoring of policy implementation. Leadership capacity building could also aim at developing reform-minded individuals within government who have experience in other spheres, such as civil society and academia, who can be crucial in mediating between citizen interests and competing interests and pressure[58]. This is particularly required for ensuring that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard throughout the public policy cycle.

Modus operandi of the public sector

61. Public administrations at the local and national levels need to be fully representative of all the different segments of the population they serve. This is critical for the voice of the poorest and most vulnerable to be truly heard.

62. Public administrations also need to respect long established principles such as non-discriminating or merit-based recruitment. To this end, they need to review and modify recruitment, training and promotion practices to eliminate implicit biases and stereotypes that disadvantage women and vulnerable groups. They also need to remove all unintended barriers to the recruitment of these groups in the public sector.

63. Introducing anti-discrimination laws and regulations is a step forward to remove the structural barriers which make it more difficult for members of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups to hold offices, for instance by promoting affirmative action policies, parental leave, etc. It is helpful if efforts can be made for recruiting public servants who themselves come from historically disadvantaged groups. Monitoring the proportions of positions by sex, age, persons with disabilities and other population groups in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) and comparing them to national distributions, as called for in SDG indicator 16.7.1, can assist public institutions in identifying gaps in representation and inclusion[59]. One specific policy instrument is inclusionary recruitment policies that aim to produce policymakers from disadvantaged populations[60]. In the case of

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[57] Scores in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) mathematics assessment, OECD, 2013 as well in reading assessments (OECD, 2012a) and DESA, Leaving No One Behind, Progress Towards Achieving Socially-Inclusive Development pages 12, 57 & 59

[58] UN DESA, Leaving No One Behind, Progress Towards Achieving Socially-Inclusive Development page 133

[59] CEPA, 2016. Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

[60] Ibid.

marginalization due to gender and ethnicity, some public agencies have introduced an alternative admission programme for female public servants belonging to these marginalized groups.

Capacity building and development

64. Public administrations need capacity and allocation of adequate resources to develop the kind of integrated policies and strategies necessary to eradicate poverty. They need to understand how the many facets of poverty and the related targets interact with each other and how to develop effective policies building on that knowledge. Public administrators need to be aware that specific groups -particularly individuals and communities who are currently marginalized by processes of economic development- need to be proactively engaged and require different kinds of services and access. Engaging these groups in the policy cycle, requires giving the less powerful or disadvantaged groups a voice, empowering them to claim their rights, mobilize collectively and exercise influence over decisions that affect them[61].

65. Capacity is also needed to establish targeted mechanisms of engagement, empowerment and accountability. For instance, some public administrations have implemented measures to address the limited participation of youth in policy-making through targeted policy and institutional reform for instance by creating a national youth congress and related legislation[62]. Enhanced youth engagement stimulated an increase of proposals put forward by these groups as inputs to policymaking. It also helped enhancing responsiveness of service delivery to the needs of the youth[63].

66. Public administrations need enhanced capacity to engage and protect the rights of minorities, migrants, refugees, among others, and respond to their needs through effective policies and accountability frameworks. This is particularly relevant at the local level where migrants, refugee and other issues relating to vulnerable groups are mostly handled

67. In implementing the SDGs, it is also critical to sensitize among civil servants at all levels, including both national and sub-national governments, about the SDGs and the need for integrated policies to be delivered effectively and efficiently.

Institutional data and statistical capacity

68. One resounding emphasis in the 2030 Agenda is identifying data as a critical element to policies and decision-making at all levels. Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data is essential to measure development progress and identify the poor,

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[61] UNIRSD 2016

[62] UN DESA, 2010. Youth Participation Committees, Republic of Korea, UNPSA, 1st place winner, 2010

[63] CEPA, 2016. Background note on challenges for institutions in ensuring that no one is left behind: Draft contribution by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to the 2016 thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

understand their situation and to ensure that no one is left behind[64]. The insufficient ability of policymakers to understand how people of different ages, capabilities or income levels fared under the MDGs had hampered the effective design and implementation of strategies to ensure achievement of all MDGs.

69. A core pillar of the data revolution is the call for more nuanced and granular data — more information from the ground, hopefully leading to tailored development initiatives that can identify what is working and change track when something isn't." Disaggregated data is defined as information on population by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts [65]. Disaggregated data are essential to eradicate poverty leaving on one behind as they include information of different population groups that need attention in specific targets.

70. Not only policymakers need to have disaggregated data, but also means of processing and analysing information, and designing and executing the appropriate evidence-based policies, in particular for the poorest and vulnerable groups, giving attention to gender equality.

71. A number of studies have demonstrated that progress has often been made amongst those groups that are easiest to reach, leaving many of the poorest and the most vulnerable behind. Conversely, other studies have pinpointed cases where the poorest have benefitted most[66]. In aiming to leave no one behind, SDG targets will be considered achieved only if they have been met for all relevant income and social groups. Indicators for the SDGs and their targets should be at disaggregated levels.

72. Public data collection process is a proxy of institutional competence, because it demonstrates the ability, or inability, of public administration in serving its aims, to organize the appropriate mechanisms to enable this information to be collected in a consistent and timely basis[67]. Similarly, statistical capacity is relevant to government transparency[68].

73. Despite the recognition of its importance, the poor quality of accessible data and substantial gaps in statistical capacity has been widespread and so are its implications. National statistical capacity and data quality vary vastly even for countries with similar economic conditions or

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[64] UN, 2015. General Assembly resolution GA 70/1 p 48.

[65] UN, 2017. High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2017). *Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data.* Cape Town. Available from http://undataforum.org/WorldDataForum/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Cape-Town-Action-Plan-For-Data-Jan2017.pdf. Page 2.

[66] Save the Children (2010). A Fair Chance At Life: Why Equity Matters for Child Mortality. Save the Children: London, UK. ii) Wirth, ME et al (2006). "Setting the stage for equity-sensitive monitoring of the maternal and child health MDGs." Bulletin of the World Health Organization 84 (7), p 519–27. And iii) Borooah, VK (2004). Gender bias among children in India in their diet and immunisation against disease." Social Science & Medicine 58:9, p 1719–31.

[67] Williams, 2006. *A New Cross-national Time Series Indicator of Bureaucratic Quality.* Available from http://msc.uwa.edu.au/?f=138901. Page 8.

[68] Williams, 2009. *Shining a Light on the Resource Curse: An Empirical Analysis of the Relationship between Natural Resources, T transparency, and Economic Grow*th. 2009. Available from https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/wdevel/v39y2011i4p490-505.html. Page 3.

geographic regions. There is a deep divide between those who have access to data and the skills to analyse and use it, and those who do not. Empirical research also shows that the situation of data deficits prevails more in low income countries, for example, 29 of the world's poorest countries have no data at all to measure trends in poverty between 2002 and 2011.[69] National statistical system thus falls into a vicious cycle, where an insufficiency of data resources undermines the quality of accessible data, while the poor quality of data lowers the demand and hence reduces the resources.

74. In many countries, most data remain at the level of aggregates, which is the case of Indicator 7.1.1 on proportion of population with access to electricity, and Indicator 11.1.1 on proportion of urban population living in slums. Other indicators have data that is disaggregated for just one or two variables. This is true for Indicator 6.1.1, on the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services, which differentiates between rural and urban populations but does not break those down into age groups or sex[70]. In this condition, policy makers will not be able to identify and target specific demographic groups with aggregated data. As SDGs pledges to "leave no one behind", it is critically essential that data is disaggregated.

75. There are also challenges on data governance such as incoordination among bureaucratic institutions. A typical case is that many national statistic offices are located within Ministries rather than independent self-suffced organizations, leading to red tapes and bureaucratic process for other ministries who have the need for data they need. The dependence of the statistical units will also hamper the quality of data since typically these units are not able to provide sufficient information on other jurisdictions. More critically, dependent statistical units would be more vulnerable to institutional bureaucracy, which is likely to block transparency and scrutiny and thus hamper the quality and access of data. In other cases, there are duplicate resources when each ministry has its own data statistical sub-unit in addition to the national statistical office, which often leads to inconsistences in data capture.

76. Another common issue is the lack of coordination among official data producers as well as the fragmented production of statistics. Data for the same indicator may vary, collected by the local authorities, national government agencies or international organizations. This is threatening the monitoring and implementation of SDGs at the local level.

77. For all policymakers and public administrators, data is needed to make the right decisions, to develop adequate policies and ensure their implementation, as well as to review progress and draw lessons learned. The implementation of the SDGs with poverty eradication and leaving no one behind at its central focus requires a boost in capacity across the board, starting with data and evidence. This requires institutional coordination, technological assistance, mobilization of

[69] The World Bank, 2015. *World Bank's New End-Poverty Tool: Surveys in Poorest Countries.* 15 October 2015. Available from http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/10/15/world-bank-new-end-poverty-tool-surveys-in-poorest-countries.

[70] Bosworth, 2017. *If Cities Are to 'Leave No One Behind', Disaggregated Data Is Invaluable.* 1 March 2017. Available from http://citiscope.org/story/2017/if-cities-are-leave-no-one-behind-disaggregated-data-invaluable.

resources and international cooperation[71]. The goals require both responsive competent official statistical systems and the building of national data ecosystems where different data producers, such as academia, civil society and business, play an increasing role in data production.

E. Conclusion

78. Eradicating poverty, promoting prosperity and leaving no one behind are at the core of what public institutions should aim to achieve. Some traditional principles and approaches of public administration can help achieve these objectivies and achieve dignity and well-being for all people.

79. Some challenges exist pertaining to policy dilemmas that may arise in the process. For example, to what extend do we pursue prosperity for all vis-à-vis ensuring equitable economic and social progress to the bottom one per cent of the population; what is the degree of participation and inclusion when considering the overall efficacy of public service delivery and SDG implementation, given the established fact that participation and inclusion processes are resource and time-intensive processes? What is the consideration of pro-poor policies versus inclusive growth for the average? These are public administration issues to be deliberated carefully, tailored to specific local context and environment but bearing in mind the globally agreed principles of the 2030 Agenda.

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[71] International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2017. *UN World Data Forum Bulletin.* 21 January 2017. Available from http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/sd/enbplus232num1e.pdf. Vol. 232 No. 1. Page 1.