

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC SERVICE FORUM AND AWARDS CEREMONY

Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco

23 June 2018

Preamble:

The 2018 United Nations Public Service Forum was held in Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco, on the theme of “Transforming governance to realize the Sustainable Development Goals”. It was organized by the Ministry of Administration Reform and Civil Service of the Kingdom of Morocco and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG). Key stakeholders and players attending the Forum included Ministers, senior public servants, leaders from national and local governments, oversight institutions, regional and international Organizations, academia, experts and practitioners as well as representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector.

The Forum provided high-level public officials from around the world with a platform to share knowledge on innovative practices and lessons learned on how to transform governance for the achievement of sustainable development. 750 participants from over 100 countries from across the world attended this event with the presence of 45 ministers and other high-level officials. Over the course of three days, participants shared their ideas and innovative practices through 20 events, including a Ministerial Roundtable, workshops, side events and an Exhibition of the 2018 United Nations Public Service Awards Winners, local cooperatives and artisans. Several partners were engaged in organizing parallel workshops and side events, including: African Union, African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), Governance Institutes Forum for Training in the Middle East and North Africa (GIFT-MENA), Government of Spain, Government of France, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and United Cities and Local Governments of Africa – African Local Governments Academy (UCLG- ALGA).

The 2018 United Nations Public Service Forum comes at a time when the world has realized the urgency of adopting a transformative governance approach to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many national and local government institutions across the world have been taking a range of actions to implement the Agenda. So far 64 countries have presented voluntary national reviews at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and shared their achievements and challenges.

Transformation and inclusion are at the center of the 2030 Agenda. The Agenda is a call for action to change our world and includes 17 ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on a transformative vision, it calls for ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. It also calls for equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care, to social protection, and to safe drinking water and sanitation, among others. At the same time, the Agenda 2030 aims to promote well-being for all at all ages and build a better future for all people. It envisions a future where sustained and inclusive economic

growth, social development, and environmental protection are achieved in a balanced and integrated manner.

The 2030 Agenda and the 17SDGs aim at promoting resilient and peaceful societies that embrace principles of transformation, integration, and equity to leave no one behind.

Governments have the responsibility to achieve the SDGs through the policies they make and the public services they deliver in collaboration with civil society, the private sector, and academia. Many of these ambitious goals are delivered to people through public services. The fundamental purpose of all Governments is to address basic human needs: food, clean water, quality education, basic health care, decent jobs, transportation, housing and infrastructure, among others. Equal access to and quality of public services are therefore critical in achieving the SDGs. Countries need to pay particular attention to providing services to people in vulnerable situations, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people, older persons, young people and children, refugees, migrants and displaced people.

To achieve this, transforming the world and realizing the SDGs by 2030 will require a paradigm shift in the way societies govern themselves. It will require rethinking the role of government and the way it interacts with civil society and the private sector in managing a country's public affairs and responding to people's needs, particularly to the needs of future generations. There is a need for new governance models with new approaches to leadership, geared towards citizen participation, and engagement. Renewed efforts are needed to improve effectiveness, inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability. Also critical is reinforcing public administration's commitment to network with other institutions, civil society and private partners, understand their needs and engage them in devising policies and innovative partnerships. Harnessing the potential and synergies among the different governance actors can help bring about change and help promote prosperity for all. Novel models of social innovation, and new forms of business action are needed in support of the SDGs. By partnering with the government, civil society organizations can play an essential role in raising awareness of the SDGs, including among the furthest left behind, and in co-designing programmes and services to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable are included in solving problems that affect them directly.

Transforming our world will also require innovative ways of delivering services based on a culture of innovation and a concern for the poorest and most vulnerable. Innovation should be part of a process to transform government to better respond to people's needs and aspirations crystallized in the national policies, programmes and strategies that reflect the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

Achieving the SDGs requires innovative approaches and new ways of working in public institutions at all levels. Sustainable development calls for integrated policies that are mindful of their impact on other sectors and build on synergies. Working in silos and confronting complex challenges exclusively from sectoral perspectives will not help to realize the SDGs. Both whole-of-government and whole-of-societies approaches are needed.

The Forum participants explored, discussed and exchanged ideas and innovative practices on:

- The governance needed for the SDGs, including by looking at the opportunities and challenges of mega trends and emerging issues;
- How to promote integrated policies to implement the SDGs;

- How to foster transformational leadership, culture and changing mentalities to achieve the SDGs;
- What governance is needed to localize the SDGs;
- How to promote collaboration at the global level among schools of public administration, public management and training institutes, and academia to equip public servants with the capacities needed to implement the SDGs;
- How to reach the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and partnerships;
- How to make institutions inclusive and ensure participation in decision-making;
- How to promote women's participation and leadership in the public service to achieve the SDGs, including through gender responsive public service;
- Spearheading open and digital government for SDG 16;
- How to prevent corruption and promote integrity and transparency at the local level in Africa.

Recommendations:

Based on the interventions and discussions on transforming governance to realize the SDGs, participants highlighted the following recommendations:

1. A fundamental rethinking of society is needed to deliver on the SDGs. Learning from the past in terms of good practices and shortcomings is essential; however, governments need not be limited by the past. There is a need to think outside of the box and have a long-term vision. A governance based on inclusivity, multi-stakeholder partnerships and multi-levelled cooperation is required, along with transparency, accountability, knowledge-pooling and sharing. True transformation of public governance calls for innovative mechanisms and practices in designing development strategies and managing public service delivery.
2. Governments should leverage the opportunities of technologies and harness the fourth industrial revolution while addressing present and future risks. Many challenges are posed by new frontier issues brought by technology, but they also hold immense opportunities and bring solutions, driven by the power to think, analyze and cooperate. Technologies are transforming the world of learning and promoting leap-frogging solutions that catalyze crowds and markets and energize stakeholders. Although information and communication technologies (ICTs) are opening a world of new possibilities in the realm of governance, governments still need to govern ICTs, and to ensure cyber security and the protection of data privacy.
3. Policy makers should be aware of the importance of harnessing synergies while addressing trade-offs among the SDGs to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Policy makers should consider both horizontal and vertical policy integration. In this regard, government should harness the potential of working together with local governments and their communities.
4. Leadership is at the core of strong institutions. Leadership should play a crucial and pivotal role in public administration. Public sector leaders should also be given the room to lead - to be creative, innovative, entrepreneurial, and visionary. Teaching and training materials for public administrations should embed the principles of the 2030 Agenda and link them to competency frameworks.
5. Increased collaboration between central and local governments – together with key stakeholders and civil society, notably at the local level – is needed to mainstream the SDGs

at all levels and wider society. National development frameworks can support SDGs. A clear communication on roles and responsibilities is critical to ensure effective government transformation.

6. To ensure the implementation of the SDGs, local governments and city leaders need to be better equipped with critical capacities, including resources, knowledge and social, political and economic empowerment.

7. Most of the SDGs will be delivered through public services that are inclusive and personalized. Governments must provide quality services that respond to the needs of the people, particularly the most vulnerable and furthest left behind.

8. The empowerment of women in all spheres of life including the political, social and economic, is essential to promoting their participation in society, and central to achieving SDGs.

9. Public sector leaders and public servants should mainstream the principles of the 2030 Agenda and include the SDGs in the public-sector strategies, plans and programs;

10. Public servants need to change behaviors and mindsets to ensure effective, accountable and inclusive implementation of the SDGs;

11. Institutes responsible for training public servants should include in their curricula both the principles and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

12. Participation and inclusion are critical in shaping how public service responds to and implements the SDGs. Governments should embrace democratic, inclusive, and participatory governance.

13. Governments should develop the necessary policies, tools, and approaches to promote the participation of all segments of society, including women and young people, in decision-making processes.

14. In the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, governments should endeavor to promote innovative public-private partnerships to realize the SDGs.

15. Governments should put in place programmes to prevent and fight corruption at all levels and among all sectors of society.

16. The United Nations should create an observatory of innovative practices on SDG implementation and put in place learning programs and capacity development activities to support governments in realizing the SDGs.

17. Schools of public administration and training institutes requested that the United Nations support global and regional knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer exchanges to promote greater regional and global continued dialogue, partnerships and knowledge exchange on SDG curricula and learning models. They requested the development of a guidance framework on SDG competencies at the global level as well as curriculum models and cases from regions or countries on current SDG curricula for public administration schools.

