CONCEPT NOTE

Workshop 4: Governance to localize the Sustainable Development Goals

Language: Conducted in English with French interpretation.

The 2018 United Nations Public Service Forum will take place in Marrakesh, in the Kingdom of Morocco from 21- 23 June 2018, with the theme of "Transforming governance to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)".

The overarching theme of Day One of the Forum is: **Transforming governance to achieve the SDGs**. 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. There is a need for new governance models with new approaches to leadership, geared towards consultations, engagement and responding to people's needs. New efforts are needed to improve effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability. Also critical is reinforcing public administration's commitment to network with other institutions, civil society and private partners, understand their needs, engage them in devising policies and innovative partnerships. Harnessing the potential and synergies among the different governance actors can bring about much change and help promote prosperity for all. New 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.

I. Focus of the workshop

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda will strongly depend on how the SDGs are localized at sub-national levels. The role of local and sub-regional governments is critical in implementing the SDGs, given their proximity to and understanding of the challenges their communities face. Local governments are in a unique position to engage all stakeholders in designing policy and development strategies. They are also well placed to identify pressing needs and gaps to improve public service delivery. The most visible and concrete actions will need to be taken at the local level.

The 2030 Agenda contains a specific goal on sustainable cities and communities: "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" (Goal 11), outlining 10 specific targets

related to housing, transport, cultural and natural heritage, disaster prevention, air quality, access to green public spaces, climate change, among others. The Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlement for All (HABITAT) contains more than 70 recommendations agreed by the United Nations member states and civil society. The World Summit on the information Society (WSIS) calls attention to the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and digital government to enhance service delivery in Smart Cities among other possibilities.

Given the current unprecedented speed of urbanization, the share of the world's population living in urban areas is expected to increase from 55 per cent in 2018 to 60 per cent in 2030 and may approach 75% by 2050. The megacities - with 10 million or more inhabitants - have increasingly become the center of human settlements with the number of megacities expected to increase from just 10 in 1990 to 41 in 2030[1]. Rapid urbanization is posing great challenges to local governments in terms of their capacity to realize the SDGs. The number of people living in slums with limited access to basic public services will increase, and inequality will rise. Issues related to housing, sanitation, transportation and health will also become increasingly difficult to deal with due to over-population and inadequate infrastructure. Innovative strategies and approaches in urban planning, job creation, social services and environmental protection, among others, will be required to advance sustainable development.

An increasing number of Member States have shown strong commitment to closely engage and collaborate with sub-regional and local governments in realizing the SDGs. Yet, connecting and integrating the various sustainable development initiatives across all levels of government will require building appropriate coordinating institutional mechanisms and capacities. The joint UNDP-World Bank Group Report shows that gaps in local delivery capacity were a major factor in determining the success or failure of efforts to reach the internationally agreed goals.[2] According to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), the responsibilities of local governments for implementing the SDGs should be supported by adequate human and financial resources and capacities.

Central governments will need to strengthen their capacities to devise policies and programmes that can promote and support SDG implementation by local authorities. Strengthening central-local relations, developing national capacities and raising awareness of local governments' role in SDG implementation will be essential to the realization of Agenda 2030. Local governments, especially outside of capital cities or metropolis, are often not aware of the SDGs. Innovative strategies and approaches in urban planning,

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[1] Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, prepared for the 51st session of the Commission on Population and Development in April2018.
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/commission/pdf/51/CPD51_10KeyFindings.pdf

[2] Mahmoud Mohieldin, "The localization of the Sustainable Development Goals: Implementing the SDGs in Colombia, Indonesia, and Kenya", The World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog (October 2017). Available from http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/localization-sustainable-development-goals-implementing-sdgs-colombia-indonesia-and-kenya

job creation, social services and environmental protection, among others, will be required to advance sustainable development.

Close coordination between national and local governments will entail a clear division of roles and responsibilities. It will also require addressing gaps in terms of capacity, information, and resources. Furthermore, broader partnerships between different levels of government and other stakeholders – private sector, NGOs, and academia- will be needed to raise awareness, mobilize resources, and monitor progress in SDG implementation.

While the degree of decentralized governance will depend on each country's context and circumstances, localizing the SDGs entails that sustainable development benefits all people, with the most vulnerable and the poorest at the centre of all efforts.

II. Objective

The objective of this workshop is to address current challenges in localizing the SDGs and to discuss how to build capacities for effective decentralized governance to realize the 2030 Agenda.

III. Organization

This workshop is organized in partnership with the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLA) and the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa).

Participants are expected to be central and local government officials, policymakers, public governance experts, practitioners, civil society leaders, academics, and media.

The workshop will be conducted in English and French. It is organized into presentations and interactive discussions in three sessions. Key messages from each session will be shared at the end of the day during the closing. The key messages from the workshop will be presented on the last day of the Forum.

IV. Structure

This workshop will be composed of three sessions. At the closing of each session, the rapporteur will present key messages.

Session 1: Cooperation between national and local institutions in localizing the SDGs

This session will examine the challenges and opportunities of existing vertical institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs. It will focus on how countries are developing national SDG visions and plans to reflect local circumstances and needs. It will also look at the mechanisms needed to identify roles and responsibilities between national and sub-national governments in pursuit of the SDGs.

Guiding questions:

1. *What are the main challenges in localizing the SDGs, from the perspective of national as well as local governments?*
2. *What institutional arrangements are being put in place to address these challenges?*
3. *Are current institutional frameworks and mechanisms conducive to effectively localizing the SDG?*
4. *What are the lessons learned?*

Session 2: Addressing the national and local gaps - Tackling capacity, information and resource gaps

This session will examine how to address the capacity gap between national and local governments, particularly in terms of information and resources.

Guiding questions:

1. *What are the mechanisms to address the skills and competency gaps of civil servants at the national and local levels?*
2. *What mechanisms can be put in place to share information between the national and local governments?*
3. *How can the localization process be effectively financed? How can the national budgeting process be adapted to localizing the SDGs and serve the policy objective of balanced development?*

Session 3: Promoting 'whole of government' and "whole-of-society" approaches for effective multi-stakeholder partnerships

This session will examine how governments can create an enabling environment to involve all relevant actors in decision-making processes, including consultative and participatory mechanisms at the local level, considering the successful implementation of the Agenda needs the involvement of the whole society. Particular attention will be given to innovative mechanisms and approaches that involve vulnerable groups in decisions that affect their lives.

Guiding questions:

1. *How can national and local governments create an enabling environment to engage all stakeholders in policy design, implementation, monitoring and review of the SDGs?*
2. *How can local governments, including megacities, effectively provide inclusive services to the vulnerable groups? How can new technologies, such as big data analytics and blockchain, be leveraged?*
3. *How can local governments use big data to provide better services? What are the challenges and opportunities for effective data governance?*

V. Contact Persons

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