

STRENGTHENING
INSTITUTIONS
FOR
SDGs

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will ultimately depend on the ability of public institutions to deliver essential services. UN DESA is working to strengthen their capacities and to develop effective partnerships for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

UN DESA...

- Brought together 24 world renowned experts to examine how to build strong institutions for equal and inclusive societies at the 18th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.
- Raised awareness of SDG 16 and of its critical importance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through its cutting-edge publications and capacity-development activities.
- Informed the review of SDG 16 at the HLPF through the World Public Sector Report 2019.
- Promoted and rewarded innovation and excellence in public services at the United Nations Public Service Forum.
- Provided policy guidance on how to leverage digital government to support transformation for equitable and resilient societies through its 2018 UN E-Government Survey.

Strengthening institutions for SDGs

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that building effective, inclusive and accountable institutions is vital to the implementation of the SDGs and to ensuring participation in decision-making, especially for the most vulnerable. Building resilient, peaceful and inclusive societies is only possible when principles such as justice, effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and participation are embedded in government programmes and policies. Strengthening the capacities of public institutions and mobilizing public servants is also critical. This year's HLPF, supported by UN DESA, reviewed global progress on SDG 16 on effective, inclusive and accountable institutions. In 2018, ECOSOC endorsed the principles of effective governance for sustainable development.

Informing the review of SDG 16 at the HLPF

The year 2019 marked the first-ever review of progress on SDG 16 at the HLPF. In preparation for the HLPF, UN DESA organized a conference to take stock of global progress towards achieving the SDG 16. It identified areas of concern and main challenges and suggested ways

forward in terms of policies, partnerships and coordinated actions at all levels as well as specific ways to leverage the interlinkages between SDG 16 and other Goals. The **World Public Sector Report 2019** provides a baseline assessment of progress on institutional dimensions of SDG 16, including accountability, transparency, participation, and non-discrimination. The report looks in detail at anti-corruption in the context of the SDGs. It looks at institutions for gender equality through the lens of SDG 16. The report also reviews two critical instruments that can support effective public institutions and public administration for the SDGs – national budget processes and risk management. By reviewing key challenges and opportunities for public institutions, the report aims to help countries create institutions that are fit to deliver the SDGs. The Department further updated a compendium of national institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs.



Upma Chawdhry and Moni Pizani at the 18th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, April 2019. Photo: UN DESA/Mimi Wang



Juraj Nemec, Cristina Duarte, and Ali Hamsa at the 18th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, April 2019. Photo: UN DESA/Mimi Wang

Building capacity for effective governance

UN DESA continued to support Member States in strengthening their public institutions' capacities. In 2018-2019, UN DESA trained an estimated 1,600 public officials from over 100 developing countries, especially LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, on promoting effective governance and public institutions for sustainable development. For example, in October 2018, UN DESA organized in Incheon, Republic of Korea, the Symposium on Strengthening Capacities of Public Institutions and Developing Effective Partnerships to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Effective institutions are essential to deliver quality public services to people, including access to education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), water and sanitation (SDG 6), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), among others.

The Department is also working with national schools of public administration from around the world to equip public servants with the capacities to implement the 2030 Agenda and to mainstream the SDGs in their training curricula. In 2019, more than 1,200 public servants from various levels were trained on the SDGs by national schools of public administration. Also, new training centres were established and new curricula developed as a result of this initiative.

As part of UN DESA's work on ICT and digital government to realize the SDGs, countries have promoted innovation and digital government



Public sector reforms needed to implement the 2030 Agenda continue to be a challenge for many countries. To surmount this challenge, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), supported by UN DESA, has developed a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development. These voluntary principles provide practical guidance to countries on a broad range of governance challenges associated with implementing the 2030 Agenda.

UN DESA also initiated a programme on working with public administration schools and institutes to mobilize and equip public servants for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Responding to the requests of several countries, especially LDCs and SIDS, UN DESA provided advisory services and capacity-building tools to build institutions for the SDGs, including through online training courses. The Department designed a four-module online training course on “Developing Transformational Leadership Capacity in Africa’s Public Sector Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda and Achieve the SDGs”.



The **World Public Sector Report 2019**, launched on 24 June at the UN Public Service Forum in Baku, was the first-ever assessment of national-level developments on the institution-related targets of Goal 16.



through the establishment of innovation centres, promotion of new institutional arrangements for inter-ministerial policy dialogue and revised digital strategies. UN DESA is also supporting digital government capacity for disaster risk reduction and resilience in Small Island Developing States.

UN DESA also collaborated with the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Development Initiative (IDI) on SDG audits and provided its support to the conduct of SDG preparedness audits.

UN DESA continued to enhance its existing tools for strengthening institutions, such as Measurement and Evaluation Tool for E-Government Readiness (METER), Measurement and Evaluation Tool for Engagement and E-Participation (METEP) and the DiGIT4SD (Digital Government Implementation for Sustainable Development) toolkit.

Rewarding those who serve the public

Since 2003, UN DESA has been rewarding innovation and excellence in public service with the United Nations Public Service Awards. The Awards are conferred at the annual United Nations Public Service Forum (UNPSF), which offers an opportunity for public servants from different countries to come together and share challenges and strategies for better delivery of public services. The 2019 Forum took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 24-26 June 2019, under the theme *Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through effective Delivery of Services, Innovative Transformation and Accountable Institutions*.

Strengthening the UN Development System

UN DESA provided information and analysis that was essential for Member States to improve support to programme countries in their quest to implement the 2030 Agenda. This work culminated in the 2019 operational activities segment of ECOSOC where UN DESA helped bring together all the key players in a comprehensive dialogue about the historic UN Development System reform. The outcome of this dialogue will be an important input into the 2020 GA quadrennial comprehensive policy review of UN operational activities.



United Nations Public Service Forum and Awards Ceremony 2019, Baku, Azerbaijan. Photo: UN DESA/Xiao Wang