

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE PRESIDENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
H.E. AMBASSADOR MARTIN SAJDIK

13TH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
NEW YORK, 7 APRIL 2014

Excellencies,
Members of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address the opening of the 13th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on “*transforming public administration for sustainable development*”.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Members appointed to the Committee this year for a four-year term as eminent scholars and practitioners of public administration. Your mission is to support the work of the Economic and Social Council in promoting effective public administration among Member States. And for this, I thank you for your participation and wish you success in fulfilling your responsibilities.

Last year, during its 12th session, the Committee discussed the role of responsive and accountable public governance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda.

The Committee emphasized the importance of promoting professionalism in public administration, including ensuring clarity in the respective roles and responsibilities, providing access to information, empowering citizens to be more engaged in service delivery, and encouraging the broad use of modern means of communication in the public sector.

The Committee also urged Member States to promote collaborative governance at all levels, in order to pave the path for the post-2015 development agenda. This recommendation was indeed very timely considering that we live in a world that is more fundamentally interconnected than it ever has been. A crisis in one country is likely to impact other countries, through economic and financial ties, migration and the movement of refugees, environmental impacts, communicable diseases, piracy, transnational organized crime or trafficking in humans, drugs, arms and natural resources. That is why we need more collaboration at all levels to achieve the MDGs, tackle the underlying causes of poverty and champion sustainable development.

ECOSOC is in a critical phase. Last September, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 68/1 to strengthen the role of ECOSOC. The resolution mandates the Council to provide substantive leadership to the system through the adoption of a main theme. A new integration segment has been established to consolidate inputs from the ECOSOC system on how to promote a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The coordination and management meetings have replaced the General and Coordination Segments, and will be held at various times in the course of the year to provide opportunities for direct engagement with the Chairs of subsidiary bodies on the outcomes of their meetings. The report of this Committee session will be presented to the Council at one of these meetings in July. These changes offer excellent opportunities to enhance coherence and complementarity in our work.

ECOSOC's priorities in 2014 include promoting sustainable development and tackling challenges such as poverty eradication, climate change, inequality and unemployment. In 2014, the main theme will be the same as the theme of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) which is "Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the MDGs in 2015 and for sustaining development gains for the future". The Council

will also convene the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) in June and July. All subsidiary bodies are invited to contribute to the work of the forum, with its theme of

“Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals”. It is important that from now on, this Committee, like the whole subsidiary machinery of the Council, pays due attention to linking its programme of work to the Council’s agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, next year Member States will define a post-2015 development agenda—a single, ambitious agenda with one set of sustainable development goals building on and going beyond the MDGs. We are racing against time. This agenda aims to be universal and unifying, while taking account of differing national circumstances and respecting national policies and priorities. It would join the objectives of poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby advancing a truly integrated development approach.

Governance is critical to achieve social and economic development, environmental sustainability, peace and security. We need, therefore, to transform public governance, among other things, by tapping the potential of technological advancement and innovation to fulfill our vision. Let us also not forget that new technologies provide many opportunities for development but they bring new challenges as well. Finding the right balance between greater use of technologies and privacy and security concerns is only one of many areas that require the attention of public policy makers.

We need to eliminate deficits in governance in order to meet the MDGs. Inadequate governance, skills and capacities, particularly at the level of institutions and public administration, often explain the delays and difficulties in achieving the MDGs. Therefore

the rule of law is an essential prerequisite for sustainable development in its three dimensions.

–As citizens around the world become more empowered, they also have higher expectations from their government and would ask to be more involved in public affairs. That is the reason why governments should promote more inclusive and participative means to set priorities and deliver public services. A culture of innovation in the public sector, supported by informed leadership at all levels, will be essential.

Transformation of governance systems and culture is a priority for sustainable development. It is also an end in itself. Strong institutions and good governance are now recognized by the international community as a catalyst for sustainable development. In that regard, the Economic and Social Council counts on your continued advice and support in assisting Member States.

Once more, I welcome the new Members to this important Committee and wish you all well in your difficult but gratifying work for transforming public administration for sustainable development in the years ahead.

Thank you.