The Role of Active Participation and Citizen Engagement in Good Governance

Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM/DESA)

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Outline of the presentation

- What we mean by participation, citizen engagement and good governance?
- Why are those concepts important now?
- What is DESA/DPADM doing to assist member states?
- Conclusions
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Citizen Participation

UN Public Administration Glossary:

“...implies the involvement of citizens in a wide range of policymaking activities, including the determination of levels of service, budget priorities, and the acceptability of physical construction projects in order to orient government programs toward community needs, build public support, and encourage a sense of cohesiveness within neighborhoods.

UN World Public Sector Report 2008
Citizen engagement

UNDESA/DPADM working definition:

Citizen engagement in public administration implies the **involvement of citizens in decision-making process of the State** – through measures and/or institutional arrangements - so as to **increase their influence on public policies and programmes** ensuring a more positive impact on their social and economic lives.

Good Governance

UN Public Administration Glossary:

“… entails sound public sector management (efficiency, effectiveness and economy), accountability, exchange and free flow of information (transparency), and a legal framework for development (justice, respect for human rights and liberties)”

(World Bank).

“… focuses on four major components, namely:

✓ legitimacy (government should have the consent of the governed);
✓ accountability (ensuring transparency, being answerable for actions and media freedom);
✓ competence (effective policymaking, implementation and service delivery); and
✓ respect for law and protection of human rights.

(ODI and DFID)
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UN Conference on Sustainable Development

- stressed **effective governance** at local, national, regional and global levels as **representing the voices and interests of all**.

- resolved to **enhance participation and effective engagement of civil society**.

GOAL 10: ENSURE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS

a) Provide free and universal legal identity, such as birth registrations,

b) Ensure that people enjoy freedom of speech, association, peaceful protest and access to independent media and information,

c) Increase public participation in political processes and civic engagement at all levels

d) Guarantee the public’s right to information and access to government data

e) Reduce bribery and corruption and ensure officials can be held accountable
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DPADM Mission

excerpt from the Mission Statement:

“… it assists the Member States of the United Nations in fostering efficient, effective, transparent, accountable, clean and citizen-centered public governance, administration and services through innovation and technology to achieve the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.”

Citizen Engagement in Managing Development

Information <-> Consultation <-> Decision-Making
UNPACS – 193 Member States

✓ Attempt to capture the key aspects of Institutionalization of Citizen Engagement.

✓ Are organized around four dimensions or variables of public administration:
  ✓ (i) policy and regulatory frameworks;
  ✓ (ii) organizational frameworks;
  ✓ (iii) channels and modalities; and
  ✓ (iv) cases of effective practices;

✓ Provide comparative information for 193 Member States
Self-Assessment Tools

CESAQ - Citizen Engagement Self-Assessment Questionnaire

METEP - Measurement and Evaluation Tool for E-Participation Readiness

Self-assess those measures to engage citizens more directly in the national planning, programme management & their functioning.
Open Government Data and Citizen Engagement Toolkit

- An entry point for the Member States planning to share data
- Includes strategies for opening government data, recommendations about applications and platforms
Enabling Environment for Citizen Engagement

Information ↔ Consultation ↔ Decision-Making

Power within ↔ Power with ↔ Power to
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Discussion

- What types of participation positively influence the dynamics of interactions, social relations, attitudes and behaviours –both at the personal and institutional levels?

- What are the necessary conditions for enabling truly meaningful/transformative participation?

- How to create such conditions and participatory processes?