

18th Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum

October 8 (Sun) - 12 (Thu), 2023

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITIES OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



IGF-INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

... to improve people's lives

By fostering innovation and promoting accountability, UN DESA helped Member States ensure that governance systems are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all, particularly those in vulnerable situations. These efforts throughout the year better equip public institutions to meet current and future challenges, accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

UN DESA...

- Built capacity of Member States to implement the 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, promoting new mindsets, innovation in public institutions, and accountability through budget credibility and external audits.
- Brought together stakeholders to discuss the critical role of SDG 16 in accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and worked towards empowering women as leaders in public institutions.
- Advanced digital government transformation, cooperation, and digital inclusion worldwide, leveraging

digital technologies to build capacities of public servants to implement the SDGs.

- Worked with schools of public administration to equip public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs, including by strengthening institutional arrangements for policy coherence, and capacities for climate action and disaster risk reduction.
- Developed governance capacities of Member States on the UN 2.0 "Quintet of Change", including strategic foresight, behavioural sciences and mindset change, innovation in public service delivery, data governance, and digital government.

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STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND CAPACITIES OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

With only six years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, effective governance is more crucial than ever for achieving the SDGs. By assisting Member States in advancing effective, accountable and inclusive public institutions, including through innovation, digital government and digital transformation, UN DESA has helped to promote people's well-being, especially those at risk of being left behind.

Promoting digital government transformation and digital data governance

UN DESA showcased the connection between e-government and the SDGs, demonstrating how e-government can support effective governance for sustainable development, in its *2024 UN E-Government Survey*. By evaluating e-government services at both national and local levels, the Survey helps governments identify strengths and those areas that need improvement. A key component of the Survey is the “Local Online Service Index” (LOSI) methodology, which aims to enhance e-government services by assessing local government portals. Greece, India, and Uzbekistan completed their LOSI assessments in 2023, with ongoing projects in Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia expected to conclude in 2024.

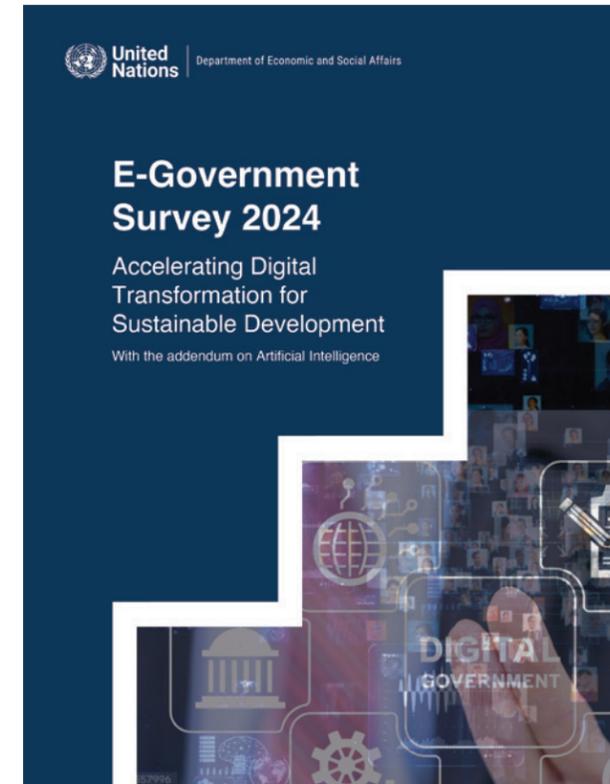
UN DESA helped countries to combat digital divides through a series of online national and local e-government toolkits. The national toolkit offers a strategic

planning roadmap, while the local toolkit provides detailed guidance for local authorities to create user-friendly online platforms that promote citizen-centric services.

UN DESA and ESCAP also collaborated on the “Frontier Technology Experimentation and Regulatory Sandboxes in Asia” project. As part of the project, Bangladesh launched a regulatory sandbox to support small enterprises, while Kazakhstan introduced a Digital Energy Platform. The Maldives developed regulatory guidelines for FinTech and Central Bank Digital Currency, leading to the launch of a regulatory sandbox by the Maldives Monetary Authority.

Calling for global multistakeholder action on digital cooperation and bridging digital divides

The importance of collective action to achieve an inclusive and equitable digital future was stressed at the 18th Internet Governance Forum (IGF), held in Kyoto, Japan



on 8–12 October 2023. The Forum drew over 6,000 in-person and 3,000 online participants – the most in its history. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida highlighted the forum's theme, “The Internet We Want – Empowering All People”, as a commitment to creating an inclusive internet that benefits all and ensures a sustainable future for humanity. Discussions focused on digital public policy issues, including data governance, digital divides, and the environmental impacts of digital technologies, with a significant emphasis on artificial intelligence (AI). A key highlight was the discussion on the Global Digital Compact of the Summit of the Future and IGF's role as a multistakeholder expertise source. The forum also addressed the upcoming twenty-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20) in 2025.

Upholding SDG 16 as a compass for navigating intersecting crises

The fifth SDG 16 Conference in May 2024 highlighted the catalytic effect that progress towards peace, justice and



Timea Suto from International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS) initiative, at the 18th IGF held in Kyoto, Japan on 8–12 October 2023. | UN DESA

strong institutions can have on addressing intersecting crises and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The high-level conference brought together stakeholders to review trends, challenges, and opportunities to accelerate action in all dimensions of SDG 16 and included the presentation of an updated Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+. The key recommendations for supporting peace, justice, social inclusion, and effective institutions that emerged from the Conference served as an input to the review of SDG16 at the 2024 High-level Political Forum (HLPF). The conference was organized by UN DESA, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations.

Accelerating action for effective governance for sustainable development in Africa

UN DESA guided implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, which

were established by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and endorsed by ECOSOC in 2018. The Department published guidance notes on subsidiarity and public sector workforce diversity. Several countries – including Egypt, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Sierra Leone, and South Africa – reported that these notes helped translate principles into action.

UN DESA and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) of the African Union have been engaged in collaborative activities to support countries to enhance governance capacities, using the principles of effective governance for sustainable development as a foundation for action. As a direct result, several regional and national follow-up efforts have taken place, including regional initiatives such as the 2024 composite of practical toolkits for the implementation of the principles of effective governance of SDGs and Agenda 2063 in Africa; and national activities such as in Sierra Leone, which conducted multi-stakeholder consultations to revamp their civil service in accordance with



President of the Republic of Italy, Sergio Mattarella (centre) at the opening of the SDG 16 Conference on 6 May 2024, together with (L-R) Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Maurizio Massari, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations and Jan Beagle, Director-General of IDLO. | UN DESA

“
My government is always committed to learn from best practices and emerging thinking and from the overall discussion and lesson of the workshop, it will further refine its interventions to prioritize SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063.
 ”

Bereket Fesehahatsion Tesfamariam
 Division Head, Development Planning Division,
 Ministry of Planning and Development, Ethiopia



UN DESA and APRM Workshop, 26–28 October 2023, Cape Town, South Africa. | UN DESA



Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, at the opening of the continental workshop on Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Africa for Effective Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: Follow-up to the 2023 Summit in South Africa in October 2023. | APRM

the principles of effective governance. The African Union Assembly decision 874 (XXXVII) of February 2024 acknowledged the partnership with the UN and noted that it is imperative to implement critical continental programmes. These initiatives arise from the joint continental activity between the APRM and UN DESA, including four workshops held in South Africa (in Pretoria in 2019 and Cape Town in 2021, 2022 and 2023).

Bringing stakeholders together for effective governance for the SDGs in Asia-Pacific

UN DESA brought together government representatives – including those in charge of public administration or overseeing public service management – at the 7th Regional Symposium on Effective Governance and Digital Transformation for Accelerating Progress towards the 2030 Agenda in the Republic of Korea, in October 2023. The Symposium focused on key accelerators for SDG implementation, including strategic foresight, digital data governance, local innovation and digital transformation, climate action, risk-informed governance, behavioural science, and civil servant mindset changes. It attracted over 350 in-person and close to 1,400 online attendees from 109 countries, including the eighth United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the



The 7th Regional Symposium on Effective Governance and Digital Transformation for Accelerating Progress towards the 2030 Agenda, hosted by Republic of Korea on 17–19 October 2023. | UN DESA

“
This Regional Symposium is an opportunity to concentrate minds on the challenge before us and to deepen our understanding of the role that good, effective governance can play in climate action.
 ”

H.E. Saber Chowdhury
 Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
 Bangladesh, participant of the Regional Symposium
 in the Republic of Korea, October 2023

Minister of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea. The symposium inspired capacity development requests from Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Rwanda.

Promoting accountability through budget credibility and external audits

UN DESA provided expert support to Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs), given their role in the follow-up and review of the SDGs. For example, the Department collaborated with the Federal Court of Accounts of



Participants of the National Workshop on Risk-informed Governance and Decision-making for Circular Economy, Green Growth, Resilience and Climate Action in Mozambique, 4–6 September 2023. | UN DESA

Brazil on the development of the ClimateScanner tool, which aims to support SAIs to conduct assessments of national responses to climate change. The tool will be rolled out globally, with up to 100 SAIs expected to use it in 2024.

The Department, along with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), also brought together over 200 participants from 80 SAIs to exchange experiences conducting climate-related audits at the 26th joint UN/INTOSAI Symposium in April 2024 in Vienna, Austria. The Symposium featured a special session on auditing climate change action in Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Developing institutions’ capacities for climate action and disaster risk reduction

UN DESA helped build capacities of public institutions to deliver climate action through a series of workshops and training courses including through online training courses on “Risk-informed Governance and Innovative Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience” and on “Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation”, launched in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. UN DESA also collaborated with the Ministry of Land and Environment of Mozambique, the RCO, and UNDP in Mozambique to organize a National Workshop

on “Risk-informed Governance and Decision-making for Circular Economy, Green Growth, Resilience and Climate Action in Mozambique”. The workshop resulted in a roadmap to design resilient, bankable, and circular economy projects able to access funding opportunities from development finance institutions.

Changing mindsets, digital government transformation and innovation in public institutions to accelerate SDG progress

UN DESA showcased FutureGov – one of 12 High Impact Initiatives (HIIs) aimed at scaling up SDG solutions – during the 2023 SDG Action Weekend. A partnership between UN DESA, UNDP, a coalition of eight countries including Ecuador, Georgia, Italy, Panama, Romania, Rwanda, Singapore, and the UAE, along with the World Bank and the European Commission, FutureGov aims to support Member States to transform their public sectors. It focuses on building public sector skillsets to create adaptable and resilient institutions using a shared toolbox; shifting mindsets towards systems thinking and foresight to enhance governance and inclusive service delivery; leveraging digital and data tools; and enabling broader innovation within public sectors by fostering a supportive environment for impactful change. A follow-up dialogue between the Group of Friends of FutureGov and CEPA took place on 16 April 2024 to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and drive public sector innovation towards SDG progress.

UN DESA also supported the digital transformation of public services in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala by training municipal and national officials. In Bolivia, over 45 officials were trained to analyse institutional arrangements and design transformation roadmaps using specialized toolkits. The training included examples from UNICEF to localize the SDGs. In Ecuador, more than 50 officials were trained at the request of the President’s Office and the Ministry of Telecommunications, focusing on digital transformation and collaboration among 17

government agencies. This included a six-month online Training of Trainers (ToT) programme and hybrid sessions. In Guatemala, a six-month ToT programme was conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Public Administration, leading to the integration of innovative public service delivery methods into the national curriculum. Across all three countries, trainings emphasized inclusiveness, expert presentations, interactive dialogues, and the development of concrete action plans.

Enhancing public servants' governance capacities to advance the UN 2.0 "Quintet of Change"

UN DESA is modernizing the standards of excellence for public administration education to align them with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in partnership with the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration. The new standards – last updated in 2008 – incorporate insights aligned with SDG 16, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable education and effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

The revision process involves contributions from over 1,500 individuals, including schools, institutes, academia, and various organizations across the globe.

UN DESA enhances the governance capacities of Member States by focusing on cutting-edge issues in public administration in its webinar series on "Effective Governance and the Quintet of Change for SDG Implementation". Spanning six webinars throughout 2024, the series covers changing mindsets in public institutions, innovation and digital government, strategic foresight, transparency and accountability, inclusivity, and localization of the SDGs. Each webinar features expert presentations, case studies, and real-world examples, offering participants practical insights and actionable strategies to enhance governance practices and advance SDG implementation.

The Department is also enhancing public sector capacities to engage people in vulnerable situations in policy processes through an e-learning course. The course promotes government innovation for social inclusion, offering strategies and national experiences. Available



Winners of the 2024 UN Public Service Awards at the awards ceremony on 26 June 2024 in the Republic of Korea. | UN DESA

“
[The workshop] made me realize how I can contribute to small actions in my department to cater towards improving gender equality which will finally lead to achieving gender equality in public administration.
 ”

Participant of the "Promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels" workshop
 Bhutan in October 2023



Workshop on "Promoting the presence and leadership of women within public institutions at the national and local levels" in October 2023 in Bhutan. | UN DESA

in 2024 on the UN DESA Digital Learning Centre, the self-paced course on "Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of People in Vulnerable Situations" is free and includes accessibility features.



Celebrating excellence in public service and promoting innovation as a key driver for transformation

UN DESA continues to recognize excellence in public service, through the United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA), which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023. The revamped 2024 UNPSA programme was launched with three categories: innovation in public institutions, gender-responsive public service, and tackling climate change. The programme received nearly 400 applications from 73 countries, predominantly from developing countries. Winners were announced at the United Nations Public Service Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, held in June 2024. The forum – on "Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: A Public Sector Perspective" – attracted over 500 participants and included workshops on artificial intelligence, empowering women leaders, engaging young public servants, and strengthening institutions for climate action.

UN DESA assisted several countries to identify and address gender gaps in public administration. Capacity-development modules were developed in partnership with Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, and Senegal, which were based on national and international reviews of practice to promote women leadership in public administration. Capacity development workshops were conducted in October and November 2023, laying the groundwork for national action plans to promote women's advancement in public sector leadership. Draft action plans were developed with UN DESA's support and validated nationally. Peer review workshops were held in Thailand and Mauritius in April and June 2024, involving countries from Africa and Asia-Pacific, including SIDS. These sessions promoted a community of practice to enhance gender-responsive strategies. In June 2024, a global workshop in the Republic of Korea further shared insights and lessons from these gender equality action plans.