



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee of Experts on Public Administration

### Twentieth session

12–16 April 2021

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

### Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

#### Annotated provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Governance and public administration aspects of the theme of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development.
4. Dialogue with voluntary national review countries on institutional aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 16.
5. Strengthening the analytical basis for reform policies based on the principles of effective governance for sustainable development.
6. Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national and subnational budgeting and financial management.
7. Sustainable public procurement in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.
8. Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on essential workers in the public sector.
9. Building strong institutions for sustainable development in conflict-affected countries.
10. Provisional agenda for the twenty-first session of the Committee.
11. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twentieth session.

#### Annotations

##### 1. Election of officers

The Committee will elect a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur for the twentieth session. The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur constitute the Bureau. In accordance with established practice, the officers will continue to act as the Bureau



for the duration of the current term and will consult with newly appointed Committee members in preparation for the twenty-first session.

**2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

The Committee will be invited to adopt the agenda of the twentieth session on the basis of the provisional agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2020/228.

In the same decision, the Council decided that the twentieth session of the Committee would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 12 to 16 April 2021. In the light of ongoing limitations on in-person meetings as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and taking into consideration subsequent guidance on meetings for sessions of subsidiary bodies during the 2021 session, provided by the President of the Council to the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies on 3 December 2020, the twentieth session of the Committee will be organized by correspondence and through various informal virtual meetings of two hours duration to be held between 12 and 21 April 2021.

*Documentation*

Annotated provisional agenda ([E/C.16/2021/1](#))

**3. Governance and public administration aspects of the theme of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development**

The theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development for 2021 and of the Council for the 2021 session will be “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. Participants in the forum will also discuss Sustainable Development Goal 1, on ending poverty; Goal 2, on ending hunger; Goal 3, on health and well-being; Goal 8, on decent work and economic growth; Goal 10, on reducing inequality; Goal 12, on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13, on climate action; Goal 16, on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice and building strong institutions; and Goal 17, on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing global partnerships. Participants will also consider the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals.

The Committee will consider the theme and the Goals under review from a governance and public administration perspective, paying particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals, and will adopt its contribution to the forum under this agenda item.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building inclusive, effective and resilient institutions for sustainable recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic and timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/C.16/2021/2](#))

**4. Dialogue with voluntary national review countries on institutional aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 16**

Depending on the time available during the virtual meetings, the Committee may invite a small number of voluntary national review countries to engage in an interactive dialogue with the experts on the institutional aspects of Goal 16, taking

into account the interlinkages between Goal 16 and the other Goals. This could include reflections by the experts on the use of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in July 2018, as a guide to transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. The experts would be invited to prepare questions and comments for consideration based on country inputs, identify challenges and provide proposals that could contribute to accelerated actions to achieve the Goals.

*Documentation*

Conference room paper on dialogue with voluntary national review countries on Sustainable Development Goal 16

**5. Strengthening the analytical basis for reform policies based on the principles of effective governance for sustainable development**

At its nineteenth session, the Committee focused its discussion on connecting the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Council in its resolution 2018/12, to regional and national actions to build strong institutions for implementation of the Goals. Work on a benchmark study on the status of implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in Africa was presented by the African Peer Review Mechanism. In addition, the Committee considered the question of reviewing outcomes with reference, inter alia, to recent developments in the field of governance indicators and auditing of Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

At its twentieth session, the Committee will take note of efforts to identify and review related technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, including from sectoral perspectives, and to further engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard, in an inclusive manner, together with all relevant stakeholders. The Committee may also consider further prospects for associating a set of indicators with each of the principles, with a view to contributing not only to the strengthening of the analytical basis for assessing the impact of reform policies on the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, but also to engagement with regional organizations in putting the principles into practice.

*Documentation*

Conference room paper on the status of implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in Africa

Conference room paper on the implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in countries of the former Soviet Union

Conference room paper on the implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development: the case of Kenya

**6. Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national and subnational budgeting and financial management**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee discussed issues related to effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources and observed that building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels, together with adequate oversight capacity, remained a major challenge.

The Committee recommended that the Goals be mainstreamed into national finance strategies to bridge the gap between policy priorities and actual government spending

and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that the achievement of sustainable development did not depend on aid alone. The timely and regular production, publication and wide dissemination of executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and other budget reports should be considered, along with budget guides for citizens that were simple to understand and accessible. Effective participatory budgeting and the formulation of indicators to monitor progress were also important.

At its eighteenth session, the Committee recalled that strengthening fiscal management at the national and subnational levels was integral to the implementation of the Goals and highlighted that sound fiscal management entailed full ownership of domestic and international flows, reduction of illicit financial flows and corruption, strengthened fiscal transparency through open and collaborative budgeting processes, participatory and performance-based budgeting, and fiscal decentralization commensurate with subnational institutional capacity and arrangements in a given country.

At its nineteenth session, the Committee underscored that achievement of the Goals could be accelerated if the Goals were embedded in national and subnational budgets and if these were effectively executed. The Committee also reiterated the important role of subnational governments in delivering the Goals. Expanded efforts were needed to strengthen local government finance and financial management to that end, including through a concerted global effort to address severe budgetary challenges and financial risks that Governments were currently facing at the subnational level.

At its twentieth session, the Committee will further consider the question of integrating the Goals into national and subnational budgeting and financial management.

#### *Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national and subnational budgeting and financial management with a focus on Cabo Verde ([E/C.16/2021/3](#))

### **7. Sustainable public procurement in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development**

Under this item, the Committee will be invited to consider questions related to sustainable public procurement in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

#### *Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on sustainable public procurement in the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ([E/C.16/2021/4](#))

### **8. Impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on essential workers in the public sector**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee discussed the challenges of building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels and readying institutions and policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee observed, inter alia, that efforts to rally civil servants and the broader public sector workforce around the Goals and instil a sense of commitment could be strengthened, along with new ways of working on the basis of participation and engagement. The Committee also observed that new policies and technical skills would be required in the public sector, given the high rate

of scientific and technological advancement and the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Goals.

At its eighteenth session, the Committee pointed to the enabling role that critical thinking, complexity thinking, futures thinking and design thinking, in addition to deliberative skills, emotional intelligence and appropriate use of frontier technologies, could play in delivering innovative public services and achieving the Goals.

At its nineteenth session, the Committee stressed that building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels required a comprehensive understanding of the scope and capabilities of the public sector workforce, and encouraged countries to address public sector workforce capability gaps, including gaps in digital skills, within the context of human resources and national development strategies.

At its twentieth session, the Committee will continue its consideration of matters relating to the public sector workforce of the future, with specific reference to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential workers in the public sector.

#### *Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on issues in public sector workforce management in the recovery from the coronavirus disease pandemic ([E/C.16/2021/5](#))

### **9. Building strong institutions for sustainable development in conflict-affected countries**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee considered the question of stakeholder engagement in post-conflict countries. It concluded, inter alia, that re-establishing legitimacy and trust were major challenges faced by post-conflict societies, where certain groups might have been systematically excluded and military, police and other institutions might be associated with repressive or corrupt practices.

At its eighteenth and nineteenth sessions, the Committee expanded its consideration of the institutional aspects of the security and justice sectors with a discussion of the underlying issues in promoting security and access to justice for all and ways to support the institution-building aims of Goal 16 in those areas.

In its resolution [70/262](#), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the General Assembly stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, and encouraged the Commission to draw on the expertise of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council, as appropriate. At its twentieth session, the Committee will be invited to continue its reflection on building strong institutions for sustainable development in conflict-affected countries, with a view to contributing, through the Council and in accordance with its mandate, to the work of the Commission from a medium- to long-term perspective.

#### *Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building strong institutions for sustainable development in conflict-affected countries ([E/C.16/2021/6](#))

### **10. Provisional agenda for the twenty-first session of the Committee**

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/305](#), the Committee should adopt a theme for its twenty-first session that is aligned with the main theme of the high-level political forum and the Council for 2022, while continuing to address issues

necessary to discharge its other functions. The Committee may wish to consider the draft provisional agenda for the twenty-first session in this light.

The Committee may also wish to consider reflecting on a future programme of work for the next term of the Committee, beginning in August 2021, and on the related terms of reference of its informal working groups, building on the experience and accomplishments of the previous four years. Members could consider whether doing so would contribute to the work of the Committee and further enhance its profile within the United Nations system through the forward-looking study of critical issues in governance and public administration relevant to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

**11. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twentieth session**

The Committee will adopt a report to be submitted to the Council on the work of its twentieth session. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/305](#), the work of the Committee should reflect the need for an integrated and action-oriented approach to the Goals and build on a solid evidence-based review of progress on the 2030 Agenda.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [68/1](#), the Committee should include in its report an executive summary, and the report should be concise and clearly identify the conclusions and recommendations and issues that might require attention and/or action by the Council.

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