



United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

**Report on the twenty-fourth session
(7–11 April 2025)**

Economic and Social Council

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Summary

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration held its twenty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 7 to 11 April 2025. The theme of the session was “Governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals”, in alignment with the 2025 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The Committee stressed that staying the course towards the Goals at times of polycrises, geopolitical tensions, conflicts and wars, disruption of basic features of globalization, declining trust in government, resource strain and fast-changing technology required an urgent shift of governments towards comprehensive systems thinking and action. Strengthening the conditions for scientists to conduct high-quality, independent research effectively was seen as pivotal.

Referring to the application of the principles of effective governance, the Committee emphasized that the transformation towards sustainable development called for urgent attention to questions of inclusion and equity in governance systems. This was particularly important, as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind depended on the provision of substantive equality of opportunity for all across the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner.

Building on its previous work, the Committee studied ways of ensuring the transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration. Various strategies were highlighted relating to the development of steering and oversight mechanisms and establishment of safeguards to mitigate bias and protect fundamental rights. Supreme audit institutions could play an important role in that area by developing common approaches to auditing artificial intelligence use in public administration, among other actions.

Addressing shortcomings in sustainable public financial management was another area of concern. As no single initiative was likely to be sufficient to ensure the health of public finances on its own, the Committee recommended a comprehensive approach to public financial management reform. In the light of multiple ongoing crises in many countries, the Committee drew particular attention to the need for the proper management of emergency funding and to limit its use for non-emergency purposes.

The Committee reiterated that, in order for governments to be able to perform a broad spectrum of functions and deliver public services, a dedicated and skilled public sector workforce was required. That in turn required various human resources strategies to attract and retain workers of all ages and backgrounds, including younger generations. Promotion of a wide-ranging social dialogue among all stakeholders could also help to strengthen public sector responsiveness to the needs of society, thereby reinforcing a core motivation of public sector workers and accelerating delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On institutions and climate action, the Committee emphasized that extreme heat and related events had become more frequent and more deadly due to the increase in global temperatures. Effective governance for extreme heat at all levels was required in response. This included strategies to prepare for and respond to such events, and to invest in energy resilience and adaptation. Enhancing collective resilience and responding to disparate mandates across institutions required strengthened

collaboration among policymakers and regulators, as well as academia, civil society and private sector actors.

The Committee underscored the impact of widespread mental health challenges in post-conflict countries on effective governance for sustainable development and the delivery of public services. Enhanced efforts by Governments to integrate effective and inclusive responses to the mental health and psychosocial support needs of individuals and communities into peacebuilding efforts were recommended, together with the strengthening of mental health systems to reinforce long-term recovery.

Lastly, the Committee facilitated a peer exchange among voluntary national review countries (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Namibia and Zimbabwe) on institutional aspects of Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17. It also held a dedicated consultation with observers.

The Committee concluded its session by adopting a draft resolution and a draft decision for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council. The Committee also revisited and reaffirmed its contribution to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twenty-fourth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions [2023/28](#) of 25 July 2023, [2024/16](#) of 23 July 2024 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include effective, transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Recalling also the political declaration adopted at the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in September 2023¹ and the Pact for the Future adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024,²

Reaffirming that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development³ is our overarching road map for achieving sustainable development in all three of its dimensions, overcoming the multiple, interlinked crises that we face and securing a better future for present and future generations,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Economic and Social Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the work of the Committee to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its twenty-fourth session,⁴ and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals in alignment with the 2025 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

2. *Invites* the Committee to continue to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of its work and to continue to advise the

¹ General Assembly resolution [78/1](#), annex.

² General Assembly resolution [79/1](#).

³ General Assembly resolution [70/1](#).

⁴ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2025, Supplement No. 24 (E/2025/44).*

Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum, reaffirms that the principle of leaving no one behind should be a core principle of public administration, and takes note of the five key transformative actions recommended by the Committee to accelerate progress towards the Goals, referred to as the pentagram of action;⁵

Governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals

4. *Recognizes* that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at a time of multiple, interlinked crises and the disruption of basic features of globalization urgently requires both short-term and long-term improvements in public policymaking based on effective governance for sustainable development, as well as a steadfast commitment to promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies;

5. *Encourages* Governments to integrate a long-term vision of society into their planning, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals and into their voluntary national reviews of progress towards 2030, and to address the complex problems underlying crises in a holistic manner, ensuring that crisis management does not hinder the continuous implementation of the Goals;

6. *Urges* Governments to reinforce action on commitments to the 2030 Agenda and promote the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions, inter alia, by systematically incorporating assessments of the social, environmental and economic impacts of public policy in all areas of decision-making, strengthening multilevel governance strategies and actions in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, and redoubling efforts to promote awareness of the Goals within the context of national sustainable development plans across the whole of government and the whole of society;

7. *Encourages* public institutions at all levels to promote inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals, inter alia, through an urgent shift towards comprehensive systems thinking and action, closing gaps in systematic analysis of interactions across policy domains, strengthening the conditions that enable scientists to conduct high-quality, independent research and effectively engage in policy processes, and promoting transformational leadership that emphasizes coalition-building, social values and high ethical standards;

8. *Recognizes* that accelerating the delivery of the 2030 Agenda at all levels calls for more integrated solutions to achieve the vision and Goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as a capable State at all levels, and encourages countries to design and implement integrated national institution-building strategies that address important capability gaps across the whole of government;

9. *Expresses concern* at the limited capacity to foresee and build resilience against the diverse challenges originating from multiple shocks in many countries, and calls for a rapid upgrade of anticipatory governance and risk management functions in government and their integration into Sustainable Development Goal-related coordination mechanisms at the highest level;

10. *Emphasizes* that effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires strengthened multilateral cooperation based on solidarity, shared responsibility and mutual accountability, particularly in the light of increasing transboundary risks and

⁵ See [E/C.16/2025/2](#).

global interconnectedness, and calls for increased efforts to support national and international peer exchanges and peer learning on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and effective governance for sustainable development, including through cooperation with existing international networks;

11. *Reiterates* that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and encourages Governments to strengthen efforts to build inclusive institutions that promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all segments of society and to reduce inequalities through holistic, people-centred policies and interventions that address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable as a matter of priority;

12. *Reaffirms* the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and subnational governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and encourages governments at all levels to apply the principles of effective governance for sustainable development,⁶ endorsed by the Council in its resolution [2018/12](#) of 2 July 2018, to all public institutions and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account different governance structures, national and subnational realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities;

13. *Encourages* the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines and experiences to operationalize the principles at the national and subnational levels, 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;

14. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the United Nations development system on strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development and to addressing interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs among the Sustainable Development Goals, enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development;

15. *Notes with concern* that many Governments are insufficiently equipped to respond to extreme heat events, which have become more frequent due to rising global temperatures and are placing increasing pressure on lives, livelihoods and infrastructure in many countries, and encourages governments at the national and subnational levels to provide institutional and policy support to mitigate the effects of extreme heat and promote adaptation efforts, with an emphasis on protecting vulnerable populations, including women, children, older persons and displaced persons, and those residing in densely populated urban areas;

16. *Recognizes* that Governments play a central role in ensuring equal access to the benefits of digital technology and preventing harm, and underscores the need for Governments, in collaboration with the relevant entities and forums of the United Nations system, to identify guiding principles and policy priorities for the regulation and use of artificial intelligence by the public sector with safeguards that promote algorithmic transparency, equity and public trust so that the diffusion of the technology reinforces implementation of the 2030 Agenda and leaves no one behind;

17. *Also recognizes* that supreme audit institutions have an important role to play in ensuring transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration, and encourages the International Organization of Supreme

⁶ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 24 (E/2018/44), chap. III, sect. B, para. 31.*

Audit Institutions to establish clear ethical and operational guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence systems by its members, assist less advanced supreme audit institutions in building artificial intelligence applications, and develop common approaches to auditing artificial intelligence use in public administration;

18. *Encourages* Governments, especially in view of stronger budget pressures, to take a comprehensive approach to public financial management reform, accelerate action to increase transparency and equal participation in and oversight of the budgeting process, establish transparent and sustainable public procurement frameworks as a strategic tool to reinforce sustainable development and curb corrupt practices, strengthen budget credibility, and ensure proper use and oversight of emergency funding in a transparent and accountable manner;

19. *Also encourages* Governments to embed commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals in budgetary and financial processes at the national and subnational levels by adopting practices to monitor, report on and evaluate the use of public financial resources in support of the Goals, such as reorganizing budgets, based on programmes and activities, and mapping and tracking budgetary contributions to each Goal;

20. *Recognizes* that a dedicated and skilled public sector workforce is required for Governments to perform a broad spectrum of functions and deliver public services in line with national sustainable development plans and objectives, and encourages national planners, civil service commissions, human resources departments and others to take steps to align workforce capacities and skills with evolving needs, attract and retain public sector workers of all ages and backgrounds across government and in diverse occupational groups, while promoting gender and geographical balance, and to promote a wide-ranging social dialogue among all stakeholders with a view to reinforcing a core motivation of public sector workers and accelerating delivery of the 2030 Agenda;

21. *Takes note* of the 2025 revision to the standards of excellence for public administration education and training, and invites schools and institutes of public administration to update their curricula to reflect new developments in public administration, inter alia, based on a commitment to public service values, mainstreaming the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and promoting digital transformation;

22. *Notes with deep concern* the impact of widespread mental health challenges in post-conflict countries on effective governance for sustainable development and the delivery of public services, and encourages Governments to integrate effective and inclusive responses to the mental health and psychosocial support needs of individuals and communities in ongoing and future peacebuilding efforts and long-term recovery;

Follow-up

23. *Requests* the Committee, at its twenty-fifth session, to be held from 13 to 17 April 2026, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the 2026 session of the Council and the 2026 high-level political forum and to contribute to the review of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals;

24. *Invites* the Committee to continue to advise on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific contexts and situations of countries differ widely, as well as to advise on making institutions resilient, effective, accountable and inclusive;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia, in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity-development needs of Member States for building resilient, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

26. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

27. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.

B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

2. Bearing in mind the theme of the 2026 session of the Economic and Social Council and of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Council review and adopt the following draft decision:

Dates and provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Decides that the twenty-fifth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration will be held at United Nations Headquarters from 13 to 17 April 2026;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee as set out below:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Transformative, equitable, innovative and urgent actions to rebuild trust, revitalize institutions and realize the Sustainable Development Goals: an institutional and governance perspective anchored in multilateralism.
4. Peer exchange with voluntary national review countries and voluntary local review cities on experiences and promising practices in implementing Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.
5. Exploring options for measurement of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and the Committee's pentagram of action.
6. Governance and institutional perspectives on strengthening resource mobilization for the Sustainable Development Goals.
7. Science, foresight, systems thinking, risk analysis and artificial intelligence for a future-oriented public administration.
8. Building institutions to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, with a focus on women, vulnerable groups and youth.
9. Institutions, climate action and environment: ensuring availability and sustainable management of water for all.

10. Interactive consultation with observers.
11. Provisional agenda of the twenty-sixth session of the Committee.
12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-fifth session.

(c) Decides that documentation in support of the provisional agenda should continue to be prepared through the established working methods of the Committee.

C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

3. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to its contribution to the thematic review of the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals, conveyed to the President of the Council as Chair of the high-level political forum on 28 February 2025.⁷

4. Climate change and environmental policy, and health policy, were highlighted as areas in which a focus on science- and evidence-based solutions had enabled policymakers to move beyond ideological debates to focus on collaborative approaches to global challenges. Strengthening the conditions for scientists to conduct high-quality, independent research and effectively engage in policy processes was seen as pivotal. The Committee stressed that staying the course of Sustainable Development Goal implementation at times of polycrises, geopolitical tensions, conflicts and wars, declining trust in government, resource strain and fast-changing technology required an urgent shift of governments towards comprehensive systems thinking and action.

5. The Committee further examined the 2025 theme from a governance and public administration perspective at its twenty-fourth session and reaffirmed the main messages of its earlier contribution. The Committee also engaged in a peer exchange with four voluntary national review countries (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Namibia and Zimbabwe) with the objective of promoting direct interaction on the institutional aspects of Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17. Each presented concrete experiences and good practices for discussion.

6. Further observations and conclusions pertaining to the 2025 theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development are set out in chapter III of the present report.

⁷ See <https://hlpf.un.org/inputs/committee-of-experts-on-public-administration-2>.

Chapter II

Organization of the session

A. Work of the session

7. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon nomination by the Secretary-General. The Committee held its twenty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 7 to 11 April 2025.

8. The Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government, Juwang Zhu, called the session to order. The Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Anatolio Ndong Mba, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, Bjørg Sandkjaer, made opening remarks. The Committee considered all the items on the agenda of the twenty-fourth session and concluded by adopting the draft report.

B. Attendance

9. The following 20 Committee members attended the session in person: Yamini Aiyar (India), Rolf Alter (Germany), Patricia Arriagada Villouta (Chile), Linda Bilmes (United States of America), Augustin Fosu (Ghana), Sherifa Fouad Sherif (Egypt), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Paul Jackson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Aigul Kosherbayeva (Kazakhstan), Ronald U. Mendoza (Philippines), Louis Meuleman (Netherlands (Kingdom of the)), Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon), Juraj Nemec (Slovakia), Katarina Ott (Croatia), Soonae Park (Republic of Korea), Alketa Peci (Brazil), Mauricio Rodas (Ecuador), Aminata Touré (Senegal), Lan Xue (China) and Najat Zarrouk (Morocco). The following Committee member participated remotely: Carlos Santiso (France).

10. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the session: United Nations Development Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Labour Organization, United Nations University and United Nations Capital Development Fund.

11. Observers from governmental, non-governmental and related organizations also attended. Observers were invited to provide written statements in advance of the session. The list of observers who attended the twenty-fourth session can be viewed on the website of the Committee.

C. Agenda

12. The agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Institutional aspects of the 2025 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

4. Peer exchange with voluntary national review countries and voluntary local review cities on experiences and promising practices in implementing Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17.
5. Principles of effective governance for delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all.
6. Role of Governments in ensuring transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration.
7. Sustainable public finance.
8. Strategies for changing mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting younger workers.
9. Leveraging key advances in building strong institutions and governance for climate action, focusing on clean energy transition.
10. Institution-building in post-conflict countries.
11. Dedicated consultation with observers.
12. Provisional agenda of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee.
13. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its twenty-fourth session.

D. Election of officers

13. The following members served as officers of the Committee during the twenty-fourth session:

Chair:

Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa)

Vice-Chairs:

Rolf Alter (Germany)

Louis Meuleman (Netherlands (Kingdom of the))

Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon)

Rapporteur:

Soonae Park (Republic of Korea)

Chapter III

Governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals

A. Principles of effective governance for delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all

14. The Committee highlighted that, as the timeline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals approached, vulnerable groups frequently lacked opportunities and socioeconomic resources, were particularly affected by ongoing multiple crises and at risk of being left behind. To achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda, there was an urgent need to refocus attention on ending poverty in all its forms, address discrimination and exclusion and reduce inequalities and vulnerabilities that hindered human potential, especially at the local level, where disparities and inequalities were more evident.

15. Achieving equitable and sustainable development for all required a holistic and multifaceted approach that integrated economic growth with social equity and environmental sustainability. Such an approach could help to provide equal opportunities for all and reach even the most vulnerable, lifting them out of poverty, offering well-being and social protection, promoting dignity and fostering resilience.

16. Equitable governance, which referred to the rule of law and the fair distribution of power, responsibilities, wealth, resources and opportunities within society, was a significant factor. Political will also played a crucial role, notably the will to address structural and financial constraints and the determination to translate policies and knowledge into action.

17. The Committee noted that strong institutions, effective governance and commitment to human rights, the rule of law, accountability and transparency were prerequisites for equitable and sustainable development. Action in those areas also contributed to building trust in government and establishing a supportive and stable environment for economic growth.

18. Sound and targeted strategies were required to address the unique challenges and opportunities of each country, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. In order to promote social cohesion and economic stability, various strategies and approaches, such as decent work, progressive taxation, increased access to social services and inclusive labour markets, should be pursued. Reforms that fought and curbed corruption, improved the effectiveness of the public sector, promoted local revenue autonomy and allowed for more participatory decision-making could be given greater priority.

Public investment as an enabler of sustainable development for all

19. The Committee stressed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development of any country were based on the human potential of its institutions, organizations, territories and communities. Thus, investing in human capital needed to be seen as a priority. That implied the need to promote equal opportunities in education, science and knowledge-sharing, with expanded access to high-quality education at all levels, from early childhood to the post-secondary level, and including vocational and professional training. To improve life expectancy and lower the burden of diseases, investment in public health programmes and healthcare infrastructure and ensuring access to necessary health services were also critical.

20. The development of sustainable infrastructure and connectivity was another area of public investment that required attention, in particular to bridge digital divides. Infrastructure improvements in various areas, such as health, energy, water and sanitation, housing and transportation, could increase market accessibility, boost competitiveness and improve living standards, thereby fostering economic and social progress.

Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and international cooperation

21. The Committee observed that providing opportunities for all required a change of mindset, adaptability and multi-stakeholder collaboration, including between the public and private sectors. That required a whole-of-society approach and a change in the way that public institutions, private businesses, civil society organizations, academic and research communities and citizens worked together to achieve equitable and sustainable development. Building sustainable communities and cities required localization of the Goals in a way that encouraged State and non-State actors to work together in the creation and design of innovative and sustainable solutions. Mapping and disseminating good practices, peer learning and review, benchmarking, empowerment and capacity-building could inspire others.

22. In line with Goal 17, international cooperation and partnerships were crucial for facilitating equitable and sustainable development. Engaging actively in multilateral forums, seeking strategic partnerships and leveraging technical and financial assistance would be crucial. Shared responsibilities were key to ensuring that no country was being left behind. Promoting diverse forms of international cooperation and partnerships, in particular South-South and triangular cooperation, was also key, as such partnerships could take into account the realities and needs of the partners involved.

Strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development

23. The Committee further engaged in a dialogue with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme on strengthening governance systems in the transformation to sustainable development for all and underscored that the enhanced governance of energy, agrifood and labour administration systems could reduce poverty and inequality, create jobs, strengthen trust in institutions and benefit all of society. Decisive leadership, systems thinking, improved approaches, equipping stakeholders with a long-term perspective and improved capacities for collective action were needed. Digital technology, data and science could help.

24. The most delicate issue in a systems approach was finding appropriate governance arrangements to manage trade-offs. Challenges in institutional capacities and fragmentation across sectors commonly hindered action. At the same time, strong institutions for sustainable development across sectors had a critical role to play in navigating various interests. United Nations agencies had found it useful to refer to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in strengthening governance systems and were committed to collaboration and partnerships in promoting coherent and transformative action.

B. Ensuring transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration

Steering and oversight mechanisms to guide deployment

25. The Committee noted that the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector was growing, which offered numerous potential benefits, such as enhanced operational efficiency, reduced costs and improved service delivery and decision-making in most policy areas relevant to the Goals. There were already many useful lessons to be learned from national and international experiences, for example, with respect to the use of risk-based approaches to technological diffusion, wherein the benefits of artificial intelligence systems were harnessed first in low-risk, high-benefit policy domains.

26. At the same time, deployment of such systems posed potential ethical, regulatory and operational risks that had not been sufficiently addressed and required continued attention. To that end, Governments should be encouraged to focus on establishing the necessary structures, rules and procedures to direct the responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence technology in the public interest, ensuring that the functioning of such instruments was consistent with national and international law.

27. The adoption of clear ownership and accountability mechanisms for artificial intelligence initiatives was important for assigning responsibility, so that remedies could be sought if and when issues arose. Specific strategies to steer and supervise responsible deployment across the public sector included:

- Creation of a robust governance structure and specialized supervisory body at the centre of government to coordinate deployment across the public sector in a consistent, strategic and responsible manner, assess and address potential risks, oversee and enforce artificial intelligence regulations, provide training for public servants and collaborate with sector regulators.
- Adoption of specific, inclusive, accountable and human-centric policies and strategies that supported national development objectives. Those needed to be linked to broader digital government strategies and/or connected with data governance strategies.
- Development of common guidelines that outlined ethical standards, operational protocols and compliance mechanisms.
- Employment of dynamic and continuously updated risk assessment protocols and customization of risk regulations on the basis of the identified risks, while imposing stricter oversight for systems deemed higher risk. Artificial intelligence developers also needed to be encouraged to proactively manage risk through regular reviews and self-assessment tools.
- Encouragement of experimental approaches and the testing of artificial intelligence applications in controlled environments to evaluate their reliability and societal impact, identify potential risks, refine algorithms and test fitness for purpose before wider deployment.

28. The deployment of artificial intelligence in government could also be supported through enablers to facilitate its uptake, such as: a solid and safe digital public infrastructure; a robust data infrastructure and governance frameworks; a high degree and high quality of digital connectivity to ensure digital inclusion; a high level of maturity of cybersecurity systems; adequate computing capacity and digital skills within government; and smart procurement rules and arrangements so that artificial intelligence was procured effectively and innovation encouraged.

29. Interdisciplinary cooperation and participation mechanisms to engage stakeholders in the development and evaluation process, alongside partnerships to support trust-building and reciprocal learning, could also promote transparency and accountability. Novel partnerships with private sector entities, including government technology start-ups, could lead to the co-creation of innovative digital solutions.

Safeguards to mitigate bias and protect fundamental rights

30. The Committee emphasized that safeguards and approaches to mitigate bias and protect fundamental rights should be adopted as a matter of priority to build public trust and so that the diffusion of the technology in public administration reinforced the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and left no one behind. The provision of robust human oversight was crucial to ensuring that artificial intelligence systems were ethical, transparent and accountable.

31. Specifically, Governments should take concrete steps to guard against bias by:

- Adopting ethical standards and mandatory procedures and embedding ethical and transparency considerations in the rules and protocols for government procurement of artificial intelligence.
- Adopting ex ante due diligence and impact assessment frameworks and ex post verification processes, including public participation, self-assessment and monitoring.
- Developing protocols to allow for transparency, traceability and explicability of decisions reached using artificial intelligence.
- Following a human rights-centric approach in which governments actively informed individuals when they interacted with artificial intelligence and in which artificial intelligence decisions were broken down and explained.
- Ensuring public disclosure of the design, data sources and decision-making processes of artificial intelligence systems in a manner comprehensible to non-technical users.
- Providing opportunities for users to challenge decisions made using algorithms, provide feedback on the performance of those systems and have access to means of redress, including judicial review.
- Educating and raising awareness to address knowledge gaps and increase algorithmic literacy; supporting investigative journalism and oversight by civil society; and raising awareness among developers and users of algorithms of the importance of transparency and accountability measures.

The role of supreme audit institutions

32. The Committee observed that supreme audit institutions played an important role as part of the broader accountability framework for public administration. Efforts by countries to empower and adequately equip them with the knowledge and information technology infrastructure required to use artificial intelligence systems themselves and to audit their use by government entities required attention.

33. To that end, the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions was encouraged to: (a) establish clear ethical and operational guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence systems by its members; (b) assist less advanced supreme audit institutions in developing artificial intelligence applications; and (c) develop common approaches for auditing artificial intelligence use in public administrations.

34. Regulators could assist in shaping the audit landscape by providing guidance on best practices and establishing mandatory requirements for algorithm audits in high-risk sectors. Developing open-source frameworks for algorithm auditing could facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among auditors, researchers and practitioners, which could lead to more consistent practices across different organizations.

C. Sound, inclusive, science- and evidence-based public financial management for the Sustainable Development Goals

35. The Committee, referring to the 2030 Agenda and the recently adopted Pact for the Future, pointed to the significant global financing gaps in implementing the Goals and noted various shortcomings in public financial management that, given the scope of national and international commitments and the volatility and complexity of the current global context, risked exacerbating an already difficult situation in many countries. Those shortcomings included a lack of fiscal buffers, a predicted rise in spending pressures owing to consecutive crises, lower government revenues owing to a slowdown in global growth and increasing debt service payments, all of which contributed to ever-growing public debt and narrowed the room for manoeuvre in fiscal policy, particularly in developing countries.

Promoting comprehensive public financial management reform

36. The Committee observed that more rigorous medium- and long-term financial planning, strengthened transparency and integrity, reform of selected financing policy areas, capacity-building of the public sector workforce and enhanced stakeholder engagement in fiscal policymaking and public financial management were all part of the solution. At the same time, no single reform on its own was likely to be sufficient to ensure the health of public finances. The Committee therefore recommended that a comprehensive framework of public financial management reforms be elaborated to support government efforts to achieve the Goals in the near term and serve as an enduring reference beyond 2030.

37. Many relevant practices had been studied in depth by the Committee in recent years, and/or were areas in which there existed expansive research networks and development cooperation offerings among the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities. The main elements had been elaborated in an expert paper on the topic that had been presented and discussed during the twenty-fourth session.⁸

38. All such reforms needed to be adapted to context, while taking into account strategic use of technical capacity and political incentives. Public financial management could also benefit from leveraging data analysis, statistical methods and economic theory to help to inform decision-making. The concept of evidence-based financial management actively promoted the use of research findings to guide financial practices. Regular reviews and the updating of financial strategies on the basis of new data and research findings were also needed, drawing on, among others, the work of the global Sustainable Finance Hub of the United Nations Development Programme; the assessment by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development of governance mechanisms; and the work of the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability programme.

39. The Committee noted that concerted national and international efforts were needed to strengthen subnational financial management systems in a whole-of-government approach. In many countries, the decentralization architecture was

⁸ See [E/C.16/2025/5](#), sect. V.

outdated, with many subnational jurisdictions lacking the capacity to generate own-source revenues or raise funds for capital investment and highly dependent on intergovernmental fiscal transfers and central government authorization and support for the implementation of the Goals. While private sector investment might compensate to some extent, public-private partnerships had also presented difficulties due to corruption, mismanagement of public funds and limited oversight, which necessitated enforcement of effective regulatory frameworks.

Budget and financial management in times of crisis

40. Against a backdrop of ongoing multiple crises, the Committee drew attention to the need for the proper management of emergency funding and to limit its use for non-emergency purposes. While beneficial as a way to fast-track crisis response when needed, the deployment of emergency funding carried risks, such as a lack of financial oversight, accountability and transparency, as well as diversion of funds from longer-term national sustainable development priorities.

41. Borrowing in times of crises needed to be sustainable and built on reserves formed during better times, when accountable Governments were expected to save. However, most Governments were not capable of doing that, for political or implementation capacity reasons. Strengthening the medium-term orientation of the budget and more systematically identifying and managing fiscal risks, including through the accumulation of adequate fiscal buffers, were critical components of sound public financial management.

42. The establishment of fiscal rules could strengthen a Government's position by restricting overspending and at the same time preventing it from engaging in reckless behaviour. Fiscal rules might need to be expanded to include public private partnership-related operational measures, as well as related accountability measures that helped to discourage opportunism and foster transparency and accountability.

43. Fiscal councils played an active role in influencing fiscal policy outcomes and might be well positioned to play a greater role in conducting analysis, raising public awareness and highlighting the reputational cost of imprudent spending or practices. Moreover, fiscal councils could present inputs to the budget process by analysing procurement plans, thereby providing technical expertise to prevent Governments from circumventing fiscal rules.

44. The Committee further emphasized the need to be able to refer to detailed guidelines on emergency public procurement in times of crisis and for all emergency procurement processes to be subject to audit and oversight, with effective follow-up action. The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Model Law on Public Procurement (2014) could be used by countries outside the European Union as model legislation to inspire measures for standard procurement, urgent or emergency procurement, simple and low-value procurement and large and complex projects.

45. The functionalities of electronic procurement platforms could helpfully be expanded to keep specific records on the procurement of emergency items and allow the public to track all emergency purchases. In times of emergency, beneficial ownership transparency was key to detecting cases of non-competitive procurement. Governments were thus encouraged to incorporate beneficial ownership transparency in their public procurement regulations and to issue regulations on requesting and publishing beneficial ownership information for all public procurement contracts.

D. Strategies for changing mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting younger workers

46. The Committee reiterated that, in order for Governments to be able to perform a broad spectrum of functions and deliver public services in line with national sustainable development plans and objectives, a dedicated and skilled public sector workforce was required. That in turn required effective human resources strategies for attracting and retaining public sector workers of all ages and backgrounds across government and in diverse occupational groups. The weight given to various factors in the design of such strategies would depend on national and local priorities and resources, as well as labour market conditions that varied from place to place and over time.

47. Despite differences in national and local contexts, many good practices could be recommended to national planners, civil service commissions, human resources departments and others involved in ensuring that public sector capabilities were aligned with a country's needs and aspirations, including those of its younger generations. Applying the revised 2025 standards of excellence for public administration education and training, for example, could help to develop a pipeline of qualified individuals committed to public service values, the operationalization of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, and digital transformation.

48. With regard to conditions of service, the Committee highlighted the merits of adopting various strategies for attracting and retaining a qualified public sector workforce and leaving no one behind, such as:

- *Establishing competitive compensation and recognition systems.* Governments should aim to provide competitive compensation packages and benefits, alongside transparent reward structures consisting of both financial incentives and career growth opportunities. Recognizing the importance of validation and motivation and rewarding contributions could foster loyalty and commitment.
- *Enhancing opportunities for work-life balance.* Governments should consider policies that promoted flexibility, such as remote work options, flexible schedules and openness to mobility, which could be especially attractive to young workers. Such measures could also improve employee satisfaction and productivity.
- *Creating a variety of opportunities for professional growth.* Structured programmes for learning and skills development, mentoring, leadership training and merit-based recruitment and promotion were important examples. Succession planning was also needed to identify and prepare future leaders. Providing clear career pathways to rapid growth and meaningful responsibility was key to retaining highly qualified and motivated individuals, whether they be younger workers or more senior public employees.
- *Promoting a purpose-driven workplace culture.* Public sector entities should emphasize their role in societal improvement and the alignment of their missions with public values. If opportunities for contributing to significant societal challenges and their root causes, such as climate change and social equity, were highlighted, that could resonate deeply with younger workers and others and help to attract the best and brightest to public service.
- *Adapting human resources management systems to evolving conditions.* Governments must continuously modernize and adapt their human resources practices. Unified and data-driven human resources management systems could

offer valuable insights into workforce dynamics and lead to new strategies that addressed generational differences, among other concerns.

- *Right-sizing the public sector workforce.* Governments should adopt a forward-looking approach, continuously monitoring the size and composition of the public sector workforce and judiciously recalibrating workforce capacities and skills in accordance with evolving needs on the basis of cost-benefit analyses and sustainable development impact assessments. That could help to avoid ad hoc crisis management decisions, which might have implications beyond financial costs.
- *Ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion.* Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, including through inclusive workplaces, addressing biases and ensuring equal opportunities, could also help to motivate and retain qualified individuals with a wider range of skills and experience.

49. The Committee stressed, in addition, that promoting a wide-ranging social dialogue among all stakeholders could enhance the responsiveness of the public sector to the needs of society, thereby reinforcing a core motivation of public sector workers and accelerating delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Effective social dialogue required an investment of dedicated effort, as well as the active engagement of workers, employers and government, including entities responsible for national human resources development policies. For that to happen, an enabling environment needed to be established that provided subnational governments in particular with the authority and resources needed to institutionalize related initiatives.

50. The success of social dialogue often depended on strong political will at all levels; a firm commitment to engaging in social dialogue with workers' representatives on the basis of international and national labour standards; a legal framework that accounted for the subnational dimension; and ongoing institutional arrangements, such as a subnational tripartite consultative committee. Other factors included sufficient resources to conduct exchanges in a professional and effective manner, committed and ethical representatives of workers (e.g. through associations and unions) and promotion of equitable access to the requisite information and data by all concerned.

51. Partnerships between subnational governments and the International Labour Organization, Public Services International and other actors could contribute to the mainstreaming of international labour standards at the subnational level while building subnational capacities. The sharing of best practices remained a valuable way of encouraging interaction among all relevant stakeholders and advancing decent work for all.

E. Effective governance for extreme heat: integrating institutional frameworks with the clean energy transition

52. The Committee emphasized that extreme heat and related events, such as wildfires, droughts and power grid failures, had become more frequent and far more deadly due to rising global temperatures. Effective governance for extreme heat at all levels was required in response.

53. Governments would be well advised to begin preparing for extreme heat events with the same sense of urgency and rigour as that associated with preparedness for other climate hazards. Vulnerable population groups with limited access to cooling, ventilation and water faced the highest level of risk during extreme heat events and should be prioritized in extreme heat policies and interventions to help to ensure that no one was left behind.

54. In addition to the threat to human health and safety, a direct consequence of extreme heat was an increased demand for electricity and the corresponding strain on power grids. Many power grids continued to rely largely on fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas to generate electricity, which in turn contributed to climate change and an increased risk of extreme heat events. The impact of rising temperatures therefore made it imperative to accelerate the transition to renewable energy.

55. The fragmented nature of institutional responsibility for mitigating and adapting to extreme heat was cause for further concern. Preparing for rising temperatures would require strengthened collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders, including policymakers and regulators at all levels of government, as well as with the academic community, civil society and private sector actors such as insurance companies, banks and investors.

Strategies to prepare for and respond to extreme heat events

56. The Committee underscored the value of effective heat action plans that set out preventive measures and response strategies during heatwaves, ensuring that vulnerable populations received the necessary protection and resources. Chief heat officers could helpfully be designated to lead interdepartmental task forces to design such action plans. The plans should include measures such as identifying triggers and warnings for extreme heat events, identifying populations at highest risk, designing targeted programmes to provide cooling shelters, setting workplace health and safety standards, including for those working in the informal sector, and providing financial support to ensure access to efficient cooling for low-income households.

57. Ensuring reliable electricity access in public institutions, including health centres and schools, was also crucial for maintaining essential services, such as healthcare and education, during extreme heat events. Those institutions might also serve as cooling centres for vulnerable populations.

58. While local governments played a vital role in such efforts, they often lacked capacity, particularly in establishing effective coordination mechanisms across departments and promoting multilevel governance structures. In addition, local governments needed to work with other stakeholders, particularly utility companies, emergency services, builders (e.g. to adapt building codes for better insulation) and energy and healthcare providers, in the design of extreme heat response plans.

59. Targeted awareness campaigns were found to be useful in educating the public and other stakeholders about sustainable urban cooling and available cooling measures (e.g. cooling centres). There was also a need to raise awareness within countries about the broader issue of extreme heat and the importance of addressing the inequalities it exacerbates.

Investing in energy resilience and adaptation

60. The Committee observed that investment in modernizing power grids was required to manage increased cooling demand. Decentralized energy systems could be promoted by developing microgrids and community-level solar installations to enhance local energy autonomy. Increased investment in solar, wind and battery storage could also reduce fossil fuel dependence. Adopting energy-efficient cooling systems, including by developing new technologies, could further reduce cooling energy demand.

61. Access to international climate finance was crucial for building institutional capacity, enhancing resilience and facilitating the clean energy transition in developing countries most vulnerable to extreme heat. Subnational governments required particular support in implementing context-specific adaptation measures.

Reform of climate finance mechanisms and the establishment of a global heat task force could help in coordinating and accelerating action.

62. Governments, banks, institutional investors and other actors needed to develop partnerships that made it easier to finance renewable energy investments. Governments could assist directly by lowering regulatory barriers, providing concessionary funds, explaining benefits to the public and otherwise incentivizing investment in renewables.

Enhancing coordination and collaboration

63. The Committee agreed that global frameworks and multilateral partnerships should be leveraged to promote international collaboration and share best practices and resources, thus enhancing collective resilience and responding to disparate mandates across institutions.

64. Given the interconnected nature of the impacts of extreme heat across sectors, cross-sectoral coordination was crucial, leading to coherent and sustainable solutions and facilitating national resilience-building. In many cases, it was important to link all those policy elements through a coordinated approach under the broader umbrella of climate action while also understanding accountability framework requirements for effective oversight.

65. Governments should be encouraged to adopt participatory approaches to engage local communities and other actors to ensure that energy transition and extreme heat strategies reflected local needs and built resilience. Public-private partnerships could be effective in driving innovation and promoting investment in sustainable solutions aimed at combating extreme heat, if properly managed.

66. Robust data and monitoring systems were indispensable tools for managing the impacts of extreme heat. Collected data from diverse sources could be used for public alerts, early warning systems, community response plans, health surveillance and climate change research.

F. Governance of mental health to leave no one behind in post-conflict countries

67. The Committee noted with concern that more than 1 in 5 people in conflict-affected settings experienced some form of psychological distress or mental health condition at some point in time, with almost 1 in 10 having a moderate or severe diagnosis. That was particularly alarming given the rising number of armed conflicts worldwide and the impact that mental health conditions had on effective governance for sustainable development, the delivery of public services and, more generally, on prospects for long-term recovery in post-conflict countries. In addition, mental health conditions had consequences for public sector workers, who might be suffering from post-traumatic stress that affected their basic functioning and the services they provided.

68. Building strong institutions at all levels and accelerating progress towards the Goals necessitated greater attention to the treatment of mental health in post-conflict settings, as those conditions could worsen over time if left unattended and further undermine development outcomes. Referring to World Health Assembly resolution 77.3 on strengthening mental health and psychosocial support before, during and after armed conflicts, natural and human-caused disasters and health and other emergencies, the Committee underscored that an increased focus on the management of mental health systems and leadership was required, in addition to the building of strong and resilient institutions that could support the delivery of community-based

solutions over the long term. A World Health Organization report on building back better contained practical examples of how better-quality and more sustainable mental health systems had been built in many emergency-affected areas despite challenging circumstances.

69. Given the significant implications for governance and institution-building, the Committee was of the view that approaches to mental health and psychosocial support needed to become structural elements of peacebuilding efforts. It was also critical to address the mental health and social needs of post-conflict populations in order to prevent future conflicts, provide a framework for societies to recover and build sustainable peace. Healing the conflicts within individuals could help them to resolve the conflicts around them.

70. Mental health interventions in conflict-affected countries could draw on a variety of methods, including psychosocial support, training, creative art therapy, psychoeducation and in-person and remote counselling, in situations where they are found to be beneficial. At the same time, mental health support for affected populations needed to go beyond individual mental health and psychosocial support to include interventions that strengthened community self-help, as well as support and advocacy for security and protection, adequate humanitarian aid, access to basic services, including basic health services, and livelihood support.

71. The Committee concluded with a number of recommendations for building more effective and efficient mental health systems in post-conflict countries, including at the local level. They included ensuring access to quality and affordable mental health services, implementing inclusive policies, providing training for mental health providers, integrating mental healthcare into existing systems, and for all actors to work across sectors to address the determinants of mental health. Strengthened information systems, evidence and research on mental health in post-conflict settings, including additional longitudinal studies, were needed to improve understanding of treatment and to establish effective mental health and psychosocial support programmes.

Chapter IV

Future work of the Committee

72. The Committee will continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Economic and Social Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the deliberations of the Council and assisting it in the performance of its functions. At its twenty-fifth session, the Committee will work on the theme that was adopted for the 2026 session of the Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development and prepare policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of that issue.

73. The Committee reaffirmed that the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Council in its resolution [2018/12](#), continued to provide a useful cross-cutting and interconnected framework for its work. Subnational perspectives could also be a cross-cutting component of the Committee's future policy analysis. Similarly, in preparation for and during the next session, the Committee could consider pursuing interdisciplinary approaches to the items on its agenda. Its analysis of problems would be accompanied by actionable advice on policy solutions.

74. The Committee recommended continuation of the practice of organizing informal intersessional working groups to lay the groundwork for its next session, bearing in mind the need to produce technical and expert analysis, assessments and policy recommendations to inform efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution [72/305](#).

75. The ongoing contribution of observers was welcomed. Further attention could be given to improving interaction with observers from all regions, for example, through expanded member engagement with academic networks and communities of practice on specific agenda items during the intersessional period.

76. The Committee recommended continued engagement with the other subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and other processes, as well as the United Nations system, with a view to promoting links and informing the integrated view of the Council.

Annex

List of documents

<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
2	Annotated provisional agenda (E/C.16/2025/1)
3	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on governance and institutional perspectives on advancing sustainable, inclusive, science and evidence-based solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2025/2)
3	Contribution by the Committee to the 2025 high-level political forum on sustainable development
5	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on principles of effective governance for delivery of equitable and sustainable development for all (E/C.16/2025/3)
6	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on ensuring transparency and accountability of artificial intelligence systems in public administration (E/C.16/2025/4)
7	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on sound, inclusive, science- and evidence-based public financial management for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2025/5)
8	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on strategies for attracting and retaining a qualified public sector workforce and leaving no one behind (E/C.16/2025/6)
9	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on effective governance for extreme heat: integrating institutional frameworks with the energy shift (E/C.16/2025/7)
10	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on governance of mental health in post-conflict areas: leaving no one behind (E/C.16/2025/8)

