

**Secretariat**

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**Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme
in Public Administration and Finance****Fifteenth meeting**

8-12 May 2000

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**I. Background**

1. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1199 (XLII) of 24 May 1967, decided that the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance should from time to time be reviewed by a meeting of experts, taking into account the public administration aspects of all programmes of the United Nations system, and that their report should be submitted for consideration to the Council. Pursuant to that resolution, the Meeting of Experts has taken place on a biennial basis and acted as a functional commission of the Council in the field of public administration and finance.

2. Pursuant to the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly on public administration and development and guided by Assembly resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996 emanating from that session, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Meetings of Experts met in New York in 1997 and 1998, respectively, to assist in the implementation of the decisions taken by the Assembly during its resumed session as contained in resolution 50/225. The Thirteenth Meeting of Experts focused on issues of redesigning the State and modernizing State institutions to face the new emerging challenges. The Fourteenth Meeting of Experts concentrated on public policy development and implementation. The Secretary-General submitted a report (A/53/173-E/1998/87) to the Economic and Social Council (substantive session of 1998) and to the Assembly (fifty-third session in 1998) on the implementation of resolution 50/225. The Fourteenth Meeting of Experts recommended that the Secretary-General conduct a five-year assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the resolution and that his findings be reported to the Assembly through the Council in the year 2001.

3. The overall orientation of the United Nations programme for economic and social development is towards strengthening international cooperation and promoting development in a rapidly globalizing world, with deepening interdependence among nations. Given the unique position of the United Nations in addressing the issue of globalization of the world economy, the Fifteenth Meeting of

Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance will therefore focus on “Globalization and the State”. The forthcoming session will consider how globalization affects the role and functioning of the State and the types of responses, whether institutional or managerial, that are appropriate for maximizing the benefits and minimizing the negative consequences.

II. Annotated provisional agenda

4. The Fifteenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance will have before it the following agenda:

1. Opening statements.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Substantive items for discussion:
 - (a) Globalization and the State: an overview. The overview will discuss broadly the elements/processes of globalization and their impact on society, especially the State, the private sector and the civil society; the State’s response to the globalization process; globalization and global institutions; and preparedness of national forces for globalization. The plenary discussion will address globalization processes such as internationalization of trade, finance and investment; rapid advance of technology; dissemination of political paradigms; standardization of the world’s security systems; internationalization of cross-border problems; and the formidable shifts of power from sovereign States to the technologically advanced global elite and private multinational interests. Though globalization is largely private sector-driven, the discussion will focus on the role of the State in responding to the globalization process (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.5 and ST/SG/AC.6/2000/CRP.1);
 - (b) An institutional response to globalization. The plenary discussion on institutional response to globalization will focus on the nature of the institutions within which people work and contribute to human development. This plenary discussion will study the experiences of globally aware Governments that have created or altered institutions so as to scan the rapidly changing environment, to promote policy invention and policy dialogue to speed up decision-making, and to embrace short-term failures in favour of creating long-term sustainable strategies. This agenda item will reflect on four broad concerns: how globalization is influencing national governance institutions; how Governments are responding to globalization challenges, both conceptually and operationally; what lessons can be learned from the positive and negative outcomes of these responses; and what strategies can be recommended for responding to the opportunities and dilemmas of globalization (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.6);

- (c) Managerial response to globalization. Governments in developing countries face the challenge of continuing efforts to stabilize the State and at the same time of adapting to globalization. The role that public service employees have to play in responding to globalization will be examined in this plenary discussion in terms both of strengthening the managerial society of the State for social and economic growth and of creating an enabling environment for civil society to flourish in. The plenary discussion will draw on country-level experiences to suggest ways and means of dealing efficiently with the demands, opportunities and constraints inherent in a globalized world. Of utmost consideration under this item is sound human resources management and development in the public sector as the key to success and optimization of the State response to globalization (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.7);
- (d) Globalization and economic governance. Economic globalization is a process that affects national and global economic governance systems. There is a need to adapt national economic governance systems in order to take advantage of the positive potential of economic globalization and to avoid potentially negative effects. This requires changes in national policies, institutions and management systems. This plenary discussion will also examine the creation of adequate institutional environments and the combination of different governance institutions such as the State, the firm and the market. It will also look into the need to establish the global economic governance regimes, based on international agreements and administered by the relevant international organizations, that will have to create the principles, norms and rules that govern international economic relations (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.4);
- (e) Public sector indicators. The Fourteenth Meeting of Experts recommended that the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance elaborate a framework for the collection of internationally comparable data. A paper on public sector indicators will thus be submitted to the Fifteenth Meeting of Experts in response to this request and will address the issues of whether the size of the public sector can be measured in theory; whether it can be measured in fact, given the constraints of existing data; what accounts for observed variation in the size of the public sector; and what types of data can provide a reasonable picture of the public sector in a given country (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.2);
- (f) Country profiles in public administration. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/225 and the recommendations of the Fourteenth Meeting of Experts, the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration in collaboration with the International Institute of Administrative Sciences launched a survey on essential information at the country level with a view to understanding the current situation and historical background of public administration in developing countries. Sample profiles will be presented at the Fifteenth Meeting of Experts for the review and comments of the Group of Experts. The survey and subsequent guidelines will serve

the practical purpose of helping policy makers and practitioners in their analysis of public administration trends and developments (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/CRP.2);

- (g) Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. The Meeting will be invited to review, and comment and make recommendations on subprogramme 7.8, Public administration, finance and development, under programme 7, Economic and social affairs, of the draft medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. It will also be asked to comment on and review the subprogramme's revised programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 as well as make recommendations for the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003. In addition to these items, there will be presentations on a Charter for the Public Service in Africa, the United Nations On-line Network of Regional Institutions for Capacity-Building in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN) and the ongoing strengthening of cooperative arrangements between the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance and the United Nations Development Programme. The Meeting will also be asked to comment and make recommendations on these items (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.8, ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.3 and background paper on UNPAN).

5. Adoption of the report of the Fifteenth Meeting of Experts.

5. The result of the deliberations as well as the recommendations made by the Fifteenth Meeting of Experts will be presented by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of 2000 in July 2000, and will be taken into account in the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session in 2001 on the progress made in the implementation of Assembly resolution 50/225.