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

8-12 May 2000

**Review of the United Nations Programme in Public
Administration and Finance****Report of the Secretary-General****A. Review of the medium-term plan**

1. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1199 (XLII) of 24 May 1967, the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance meets biennially. By paragraph 7 of that resolution, the Council decided that the Programme 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 its report should be submitted for consideration to the Council.

2. Primarily, the Group of Experts at its fifteenth meeting will be asked to review the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance in the context of the medium-term plan for the United Nations programme on economic and social affairs. The proposals for the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 are currently being prepared by the Secretariat. In its resolution 53/207 of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly approved revisions to the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, as recommended by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. The attention of the

Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance is drawn to the following parts of the revised Regulations dealing with the medium-term plan:

“Regulation 4.2. The medium-term plan shall be a translation of legislative mandates into programmes and subprogrammes. Its objectives and strategies shall be derived from the policy orientations and goals set by the intergovernmental organs. It shall clearly reflect Member States’ priorities as set out in legislation adopted by functional and regional intergovernmental bodies within their spheres of competence and by the General Assembly, on advice from the Committee for Programme and Coordination.”

“Regulation 4.8. The programmes and subprogrammes of the proposed medium-term plan shall be reviewed by the relevant sectoral, functional and regional intergovernmental bodies, if possible during the regular cycle of their meetings prior to their review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions shall consider the

proposed medium-term plan in accordance with their terms of reference.”

“Regulation 4.15. Specialized intergovernmental bodies and expert bodies, when reviewing the relevant programmes of the medium-term plan within their sphere of competence, shall refrain from establishing priorities that are not consistent with the overall priorities in the medium-term plan.”

3. Annex I contains the narrative of the draft medium-term plan of subprogramme 8, Public administration, finance and development, of programme 7, Economic and social affairs. The Group of Experts is invited to review, comment and make recommendations as appropriate on the draft narrative of the subprogramme. Of importance are the strategies proposed for the implementation of the subprogramme as well as the key emerging issues to be addressed.

B. Review of the programme budget

4. The activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance for the biennium 2000-2001 are included in the programme budget,¹ which was approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 54/250 A-C of 23 December 1999. The programme budget reflects the recommendations made at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts and is pursuant to Assembly resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996. Although the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 has already been approved by the Assembly, the Group of Experts is still invited to comment on and endorse the activities programmed for the biennium, in particular the work involving the preparation and issuance of the recurrent publication entitled *Basic Data and Trends in the Public Sector* (see annex II, para. 9.163 (b) (ii)). This publication was included in the work programme of the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration in response to the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Assembly resolution 50/225 (A/53/173-E/1998/87), and will constitute the Division's flagship report. Suggestions on more specific themes to be covered by the ad hoc expert groups and related publications would also be sought from the Group of Experts.

5. In the context of the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, which will be prepared prior to

the Sixteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts in 2002, the Group of Experts at its fifteenth meeting is also invited to comment and make recommendations on, *inter alia*, the themes, dates and composition of the Group of Experts. Those recommendations will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the programme budget for the next biennium. Of particular relevance would be recommendations aimed at enhancing the visibility and impact of public administration and finance in intergovernmental deliberations of economic and social matters.

C. Five-year assessment of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225

6. The Economic and Social Council, in its decision 1998/220 of 23 July 1998, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/201 of 15 December 1998, decided that the Secretary-General would conduct a five-year assessment of the progress made in the implementation of Assembly resolution 50/225 and would report his findings to the Assembly through the Council in 2001. The recommendations contained in document A/53/173-E/1998/87 include the preparation of a more comprehensive and in-depth review to be carried out in 2001 of the changes, trends and developments in the area of public administration and development and of national and international measures taken in response to the resolution. The Secretariat would welcome recommendations concerning the format and content of the report. The Group of Experts may also wish to consider a recommendation on the treatment of this report by the Council and the Assembly.

D. On-line Network of Regional Institutions for Capacity-Building in Public Administration and Finance

7. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 53/220 A and B of 8 June 1999 on the Development Account, approved proposals made in the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (A/53/374). One of the proposals approved by the General Assembly was the on-line network of regional institutions for capacity-building in public administration and finance. The Assembly has entrusted the Division for Public Economics and Public

Administration of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the task of implementing this activity, utilizing the development dividend. The Group of Experts is invited to review, comment and make recommendations on the progress to date of the United Nations On-line Network of Regional Institutions for Capacity-Building in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN), as contained in background paper No. 1, and on its future developments.

E. Charter for the Public Service in Africa

8. The African civil service ministers have embarked on an initiative to enhance the professionalism and ethical conduct of the public service in Africa in order to face the challenges of the new millennium. The Rabat Declaration, adopted at the second Pan-African Conference of Ministers of the Civil Service in December 1998, provided the mandate to elaborate on a charter for the public service in Africa outlining the basic conditions for enhancing its role, values and image and to develop strategies to assist the African countries to achieve such objectives. The Group of Experts will be invited to review, comment on and provide recommendations on the draft Charter, which will be presented for approval at the third Pan-African Conference, as well as on potential similar initiatives in other regions or in a global context. The meeting will have before it a report on the background and synopsis of the draft Charter for the Public Service in Africa (ST/SG/AC.6/2000/L.3) for its consideration of this item.

F. Relationship with the United Nations Development Programme

9. In paragraph 12 of its resolution 50/225, the General Assembly stressed the importance of an increased synergy, cooperation and coordination between United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies, the United Nations Secretariat and the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure that the substantive and technical capacity of the United Nations system was optimized. In the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, it was stated that the subprogramme on public administration, finance and development would also ensure interface between the intergovernmental policy deliberations and the relevant

operational work of the organizations of the United Nations system active in this field, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.² To this end, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is responsible for the implementation of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, and UNDP, which is responsible for the implementation of country programmes in this field, have launched a strategic partnership in the broad area of governance and public sector management. This partnership is intended to strengthen linkages between the policies developed in the intergovernmental bodies, which the Department serves, and the country programmes, for which UNDP has the primary responsibility. This partnership will ensure that the two organizations are mutually supportive in this field, operate in a complementary and non-competitive manner, reinforce their respective mandates and activities and eliminate duplication of efforts. The endorsement of this partnership, the details of which are contained in background paper No. 2, is being sought from the Group of Experts.

G. International day and award on public administration

10. In previous meetings of the Group of Experts, including during the resumed fiftieth session of the General Assembly in May 1996, suggestions were made to acknowledge in an international forum the pivotal role that public administration and public administration officials, in particular, play in the development process. Recognition of this role and the importance attached to it by the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies, national Governments, non-governmental organizations and other institutions will contribute to the further enhancement of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. Towards this end, the Group of Experts at its fifteenth meeting is therefore invited to consider a recommendation for instituting an annual international award on public administration and for the designation of an international public administration day.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/54/6/Rev.1).*

² *Ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/53/6/Rev.1), para. 28.20.*

Annex I

Proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005: programme 7, Economic and social affairs

Subprogramme 8 Public administration, finance and development

Objective

7.36 The objective is to provide assistance in intergovernmental policy deliberations on the role of public administration, public finance and public economics in the development process and to assist interested Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in strengthening their policy-making, institutional and managerial capacities in those areas. Guidance to the subprogramme is provided by the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance and the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

Strategy

7.37 The Division for Public Economics and Public Administration is responsible for this subprogramme. The strategy will include:

- (a) Provision of support to intergovernmental policy deliberations;
- (b) Preparation of analytical studies and publications; dissemination of information and assessments; and organization of expert group meetings and seminars;
- (c) Provision, on request from Governments, of advisory services, training and other technical cooperation activities in the areas of public economics, public administration and public finance;
- (d) Facilitation of the development of human resources to enable the public sector to face the challenges of globalization and interdependence;
- (e) Development of analytical tools and options using adequate methodologies for impact assessment, such as in the economic analysis related to multilateral and unilateral economic sanctions.

Expected accomplishments

7.38 Expected accomplishments would include:

- (a) Improved intergovernmental dialogue and facilitation of consensus-building and decision-making;
- (b) Broadened common understanding of and approaches to public management;
- (c) Strengthened institutional and human resources capacity of Member States;
- (d) Broader and deeper understanding of major issues of public economics, public administration and public finance;
- (e) Improved interface and coordination between the intergovernmental policy deliberations and operational activities of the United Nations system in the field of public administration, finance and development.

Indicators of achievement

7.39 Indicators of achievement would include:

- (a) The level of satisfaction for the support provided by the subprogramme to the expert groups and the policy processes;
- (b) The number and quality of technical advisory services provided to requesting countries and the impact on capacity-building in those countries;
- (c) The number of established information networks among policy-makers, practitioners and experts within and between regions.

Annex II

Programme budget for the biennium 2000-20001: section 9, Economic and social affairs

Subprogramme 8 Public administration, finance and development

9.153 This subprogramme will be carried out by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration.

9.154 The subprogramme will assist in intergovernmental policy deliberations and in promoting global and collective approaches by providing information and policy-oriented analysis on the role of public administration, public finance and public economics in the development process. Policy options will be reviewed and analysed with respect to the new and evolving role of the State; the interface of States and markets; modalities and purposes of State intervention; and the role of the State in privatization, in securing the provision of vital social services and promoting human development, in the establishment and maintenance of safety nets, in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, in the elaboration and implementation of monetary and fiscal policies and in income distribution, the raising of revenue and the management of financial resources in transparent and accountable ways.

9.155 Activities under the subprogramme will also contribute to the identification of options, mechanisms and practices instrumental in strengthening key State institutions, in promoting the rule of law, in increasing the participation of citizens in the running of the State and in creating an enabling environment for public-sector growth. In this context, the programme will deal with electoral mechanisms and processes, parliaments and other representative bodies, institutional machinery designed to facilitate participation in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies, management of diversity and consensus-building, judicial systems, legal and regulatory framework and establishing conditions of predictability about where businesses can operate productively and experience innovative growth.

9.156 Also provided under the subprogramme will be policy-oriented analysis on administrative reform, de-

bureaucratization and decentralization, leadership development, human resources development and training, civil service systems and codes, enhancement of professionalism and ethics in the civil service, management innovation, introduction of new technologies in the public sector and improvement and innovations of public-service delivery.

9.157 Policy analysis on public finance will cover policies and processes related to resource mobilization, tax administration, government budgeting and accounting and establishment of systems of control and accountability.

9.158 The subprogramme will respond to requests from Governments and intergovernmental bodies for information, methodologies, assessments and policy proposals regarding the linkages between political and economic issues and policies, such as the economic and social impact of United Nations-imposed sanctions, the effects of coercive economic measures, the implications of the peace-development link and selected aspects of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

9.159 The subprogramme will assist Governments in improving public administration and finance systems by facilitating access to information, customizing and disseminating best practices and providing an international forum for the exchange of experiences. In this regard, the subprogramme will serve as a clearing house that would aim to serve Member States, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by maintaining on-line information on public administration and finance for development. The exchange of experiences on a South-South direction will be particularly emphasized.

9.160 The subprogramme will strengthen the capacity of Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, at their request, for policy analysis and development, and socio-economic development management, including the infrastructure necessary for their institutional and human resources development, as well as for implementing relevant commitments agreed upon at major United Nations conferences. In accordance with General Assembly

resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996, particular attention will be given to strengthening governance systems and institutions, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training, improving performance of the public sector, increasing public- and private-sector interaction, promoting management innovations, improving the management of development programmes, enhancing government legal capacity, and strengthening the regulatory framework, resource mobilization, revenue administration, financial management, and transparency and accountability through the provision of advisory services, technical assistance and human resources development.

9.161 The subprogramme will also promote the interface and coordination between the intergovernmental policy deliberations and the relevant operational work of the organizations of the United Nations system active in the field of public administration, public finance and development, as well as cooperation with other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other United Nations entities, agencies and programmes.

Expected accomplishments

9.162 The expected accomplishments under the subprogramme will include: (a) improved intergovernmental dialogue through the adoption of common global approaches and qualitative and timely reports and documentation; (b) facilitation of consensus-building, decision-making and policy direction in the field of special public policies and development, at the national and international levels; (c) increased utilization and linkages of the specialized web sites and databases of the Division; (d) effectiveness of advisory services, training and technical cooperation projects carried out by the subprogramme in the areas of public policy, public administration and public finance, which will be assessed in the light of improved government capacities; and (e) improved interface and coordination between the intergovernmental policy deliberations and operational activities of the United Nations system and increased cooperation with intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations active in the field of public administration, public finance and development so as to reduce duplication and overlap of activities.

Outputs

9.163 During the biennium 2000-2001, the following outputs will be delivered:

(a) *Servicing of intergovernmental/expert bodies*

(i) Substantive servicing of meetings. General Assembly (8 meetings); panels as required by the Assembly on emerging issues in the public sector; Economic and Social Council (6 meetings); panels as required by the Council on basic data and trends in the public sector; Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance (also provision of technical servicing) (20 plenary and 12 working group meetings); and Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (also provision of technical servicing, including its Steering Committee) (20 plenary and 8 working group meetings);

(ii) Parliamentary documentation

a. General Assembly. Reports on review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996 (1, through the Economic and Social Council); economic assistance to countries affected by the application of multilateral economic sanctions (2); economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (1); and business, development and entrepreneurship (1);

b. Economic and Social Council. Report on the fifteenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance; and report on the tenth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on International Cooperation in Tax Matters;

c. Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. Report on the review of work on the programme in public administration, finance and development; comprehensive report on basic data and trends in the public sector; and four analytical/working papers on selected issues;

d. Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

Revised manual for the negotiation of bilateral tax treaties between developed and developing countries; revised United Nations model double taxation convention between developed and developing countries;

(iii) Ad Hoc Expert Group meetings. Measurement concepts and data for the public sector (in cooperation with the Statistics Division); innovations in the provision of public services (in cooperation with the Division for Social Policy and Development); strategies for improving resource mobilization in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; coercive economic measures against developing countries; key issues in strengthening of public institutions in developing countries and countries in transition; and financial management and accountability in the face of globalization;

(b) *Other substantive activities*

(i) Five regional ministerial meetings on emerging trends in the public sector (in cooperation with the regional commissions);

(ii) Recurrent publications. *Directory of Organizations and Institutions in the Public Sector* (2 issues); supplements to *International Tax Agreements* (2); *Basic Data and Trends in the Public Sector*; *United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention* (update); and *Manual for the Negotiation of Bilateral Tax Treaties*;

(iii) Non-recurrent publications on the following subjects: measurement concepts and data for the public sector; innovations in the provision of public services; strategies for improving resource mobilization in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; key issues in strengthening of public institutions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; and financial management and accountability in the face of globalization;

(iv) Information services and technical materials. *Development Administration Newsletter* (4 issues); Internet clearing house on the public sector; working/discussion papers on specialized issues (10); database on public

sector indicators and measurements; database on ethics and integrity systems; maintenance and improvement of the web site on the administration and cost of elections; database on conflict management organizations, programmes and practitioners; and web site on local governance for eco-partnership;

(c) *International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison*

(i) Participation in meetings of a number of global and regional intergovernmental organizations related to the five-year review on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225, in particular: Centro Latinoamericano de Administración para el Desarrollo, Commonwealth Secretariat, OECD, Arab Administrative Development Organization, Centre africain de formation et de recherche administratives pour le développement, Observatoire des fonctions publiques africaines, Caribbean Centre for Administrative Development and other relevant intergovernmental organizations;

(ii) Participation in activities and meetings of a number of non-governmental and professional and academic organizations related to the five-year review on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225, in particular: American Society of Public Administration, Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management, Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa, European Centre for Development Policy Management, International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration, Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, International Foundation for Election Systems, International Institute of Administrative Sciences, International Union of Local Authorities, International Chamber of Commerce Commission on Taxation, Commonwealth Association on Tax Administration, Council of Executive Secretaries of Tax Organizations and United Nations/International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions;

(iii) Interface and cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes related to the five-year review on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225, in particular: the World Bank, UNDP, ESCAP, ECA, ECLAC, ESCWA, ECE, ILO, UNESCO, the ILO Training Centre, UNCTAD, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Centre for Crime Prevention and UNIDO;

(iv) Substantive support to the standing consultative mechanism of agencies active in the area of public administration, finance and development;

(d) *Technical cooperation* (RB/XB)

(i) Policy advisory services. Needs assessment and diagnostic missions related to the substantive expertise of the Division for developing countries and countries with economies in transition at their request;

(ii) Guidelines, manuals and training materials for application to the public sector;

(iii) Training. Seminars, workshops and policy dialogues in the area of public policy, public administration and finance, with particular emphasis on initiatives fostering South-South cooperation;

(iv) Field projects (in partnership with UNDP and other operational entities) aimed at strengthening the capacity of interested developing countries and countries with economies in transition within the substantive expertise of the Division.