



## Capacity Development Webinar Series<sup>1</sup>

### *“Strengthening the Role of Public Institutions in Achieving Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development”*

#### Part II

**16 October 2020  
9:00 – 11:00 am (EDT)**

#### Background

Poverty remains a central challenge to the international community. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this challenge, pushing back into extreme poverty an estimated 71 million people in 2020, the first rise in global poverty since 1998, according to the 2020 Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on Progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup>. Unemployment, lost incomes, limited social protection, and disruptions, or lack of access, to essential social services place millions more people at increased risk of poverty and hunger.

The cascading impact of the COVID-19 pandemic shines a fresh spotlight on the role of public institutions in providing essential services and in alleviating poverty and hunger, especially for the vulnerable groups. During its virtual meetings this past May, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) underscored that, in many countries, the challenges facing the public sector that existed before the pandemic had become more prevalent and prominent. The pandemic has exposed risks and vulnerabilities of Governments, for example, in terms of their unpreparedness for crises, inadequacies in public infrastructure and investment, including in health systems, and imbalances in economic and social development<sup>3</sup>. Revisiting the role of public institutions, including those at the local level, with a view to reinvigorating their contributions to poverty eradication in the Decade of Action for SDGs delivery, is imperative.

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals focuses on ending poverty in all its form everywhere by 2030. Furthermore, in its [resolution 72/233](#), the General Assembly proclaimed the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027). The theme of the Third Decade is “Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty”, in line with the 2030 Agenda for

---

<sup>1</sup> The capacity development webinar series titled “High Level Think Tank Forum on State Governance in Developing Countries” is jointly organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and China National Academy of Governance. The first webinar is in two parts, with the first part held in Beijing, China, under the theme of “China’s Experiences in Anti-Poverty: Strengthening the Role of Public Institutions in Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development”.

<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs>

<sup>3</sup> E/2020/44-E/C.16/2020/8, p 14.

Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup>. The Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) highlights the importance of universal health coverage and equitable access to quality services<sup>5</sup>. It also emphasizes that “ending poverty is not just about people’s income but also their access to basic needs, such as quality education and health care, clean water and sanitation, decent housing and security.”

Indeed, public institutions play a multi-faceted role in advancing sustainable development and eradication of poverty and hunger. They help formulate sound public policy, ensure transparency, accountability and efficiency in delivery of essential public services, while promoting public participation and leaving no one behind.

Experience indicates that countries with effective public institutions at the national level were able to reduce poverty twice as fast as countries with feeble capacity and were more likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015<sup>6</sup>. Eradicating poverty, which requires a multi-dimensional and integrated approach, depends on public institutions’ capacities to implement reforms that are needed to achieve the SDGs. By strengthening institutional capacity at the national level, public institutions can increase the effectiveness of their interventions to promote social inclusion and equality of opportunities.

Local governments also play a critical role in identifying people living in poverty, and effectively targeting resources and services to promote the well-being of vulnerable groups. They can also help to build communities’ resilience to shocks and disasters such as the current COVID 19 pandemic.

Strengthening institutional capacities to effectively respond and address the needs of the poor who are disproportionately impacted by health emergencies and disasters requires risk-informed governance and evidence-based decision-making. People living in poverty and vulnerable populations are most impacted in times of disasters and are likely to slide much deeper into unrecoverable circumstances when disasters strike pushing them further behind. To effectively address the far-reaching impact of pandemics to reduce poverty and achieve the SDGs, it is imperative to adopt an inclusive approach by mobilizing key stakeholders, including civil society actors, the private sector, local governments and effective partnerships. There is also the need to address structural inequalities, provide investments in social protection and welfare schemes, as well as create safety nets that are risk-informed.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), in collaboration with China National Academy of Governance (CNAG), is organizing a capacity building webinar on strengthening the role of public institutions in achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development. The webinar is supported by the 2030 Agenda Sub-fund of the United Nations Peace and Development Fund. It aims to explore country experiences in achieving poverty reduction and eradication through strengthened public institutions, identify lessons learned and successful outcomes, and share recommendations on the way forward.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/UN-System-wide-Plan-of-Action-for-the-Third-UN-Decade-for-the-Eradication-of-Poverty.27-June-2019.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> A/73/298, paras. 23 and 46

<sup>6</sup> *Poverty reduction during 1990–2013: Did millennium development goals adoption and state capacity matter?* Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X17304035>

## Principles of effective governance for sustainable development

The webinar will build upon the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by CEPA and endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 2018. The principles seek to help build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with a view to achieving the shared vision for the people and the planet embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>7</sup> As basic principles, they apply to all public institutions, including executive and legislative organs, the security and justice sectors, independent constitutional bodies and State corporations. The principles are accompanied by a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices. Combined, they help guide efforts to rebuild public sectors and reinvigorate the multi-faceted role of public institutions in poverty eradication and sustainable development.

To start with, **Principle 1** underscores the importance of competence and the need for institutions to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority. Commonly used strategies to operationalize this Principle include the promotion of a professional public sector workforce, strategic human resources management, leadership development and training of civil servants, performance management, results-based management, financial management and control, efficient and fair revenue administration and investment in e-government.

**Principle 3** focuses on collaboration and coordination, calling on institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors to work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect. Commonly used strategies include centre of government coordination under the Head of State or Government, collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas, raising awareness of the SDGs, network-based governance and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

**Principle 4** addresses the integrity of public servants, stressing that to serve in the public interest, civil servants are to discharge their official duties honestly, fairly and in a manner consistent with soundness of moral principle. Commonly used strategies include the promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies, codes of conduct for public officials, competitive public procurement, elimination of bribery and trading in influence, conflict of interest policies, whistle-blower protection and provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants.

Continuing the focus on accountability, **Principle 5** calls for institutions to be open and candid in the execution of their functions and promote access to information, subject only to the specific and limited exceptions as provided by law; and **Principle 6** underlines the importance of independent oversight, calling on oversight agencies to act according to strictly professional considerations and apart from and unaffected by others.

On sound policy making, **Principles 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11** call for leaving no one behind, non-discrimination in access to public services, active public participation, decentralization and intergenerational equity.

## Objectives

The objective of the webinar is to discuss challenges and share lessons learned at the country level on how to revisit the role of public institutions in poverty eradication and sustainable development in the

---

<sup>7</sup> E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8, para. 31

context of COVID-19 and what steps should be taken to strengthen and reinvigorate public institutions to confront the crisis and to reduce and eradicate poverty, guided by the 11 principles of effective governance. In particular, the webinar aims to lead to concrete and actionable recommendations that can be adapted to country circumstances in revitalizing public institutions to eradicate poverty and advance progress in achieving the SDGs in the post COVID-19 era.

## **Format**

The webinar will run for two hours. It will be conducted in English using video conferencing tools such as Zoom and Facebook Live.

The recordings will be posted on the website after the conclusion of the webinar. The follow-up actions, including key recommendations and summary of the discussion, will be disseminated through the UN DESA website.

## **Targeted Audience**

The target audience of the webinar includes government officials who are in charge of leading and coordinating national efforts to address poverty and hunger and sustainable development in the context of COVID-19, local government officials responsible for essential service delivery at the frontline, and researchers and experts in public administration. The webinar also aims to engage civil society organizations, the private sector, and regional/international organizations that are addressing implementation of the SDGs in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

## **Expected Results**

The webinar aims to revisit and reinvigorate public institutions in poverty eradication and sustainable development, guided by the 11 principles of effective governance. The webinar will result in a) enhanced understanding of the multi-faceted role of public institutions in poverty eradication and sustainable development through sharing of national experiences and mutual learning; b) actionable recommendations on the way forward in strengthening public institutions; c) launch of an arrangement for continuing in-depth discussion on how to revitalize public institutions through mutual learning and capacity development.

## **Key questions on revisiting and revitalizing public institutions in poverty reduction and eradication and in advancing progress in achieving the SDGs in the Decade of Action for SDG delivery**

- What are the national and local experiences of public institutions in achieving poverty reduction and eradication in recent years and in the ongoing context of COVID-19? Has the role of public institutions been strengthened or weakened and what are some of the drivers behind such experiences?
- What measures and steps have been taken to revitalize public institutions?
- How have they been implemented and what obstacles and barriers were encountered, if any?
- What are the lessons learned and success stories? How can they be scaled up and adapted to national and local circumstances?

- How can the Principles of Effective Governance be implemented to help guide efforts to strengthen public institutions? What are some of the effective approaches or modalities for this process?
- How can science, technology and innovation, including digital technologies, be harnessed to support and enhance the accountability and efficiency of public services delivery, especially to the vulnerable groups?
- How can we strengthen institutional capacities to effectively respond to health emergencies and other risks, and address the needs of the people living in poverty?
- What are the top three actionable recommendations to be implemented?

Proposed Agenda	
Time (EDT)	
9:00- 9: 32 am	<p><b>Moderator: ASG Maria Francesca Spatolisano</b></p> <p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Zhenmin Liu</b>, Under-Secretary-General, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)</li> <li>• <b>Mr. ZHANG Jun</b>, Permanent Representative of China to the UN</li> <li>• <b>Mr. LI Ji</b>, vice president of CNAG (presenting outcomes of Part I in recorded video message)</li> <li>• <b>Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi</b>, Chairperson of UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration</li> </ul>
9:32-10:35 am	<p><b>Revisiting the role of public institutions in poverty eradication and sustainable development: country experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E Ms. María Del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo, Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy Republic of Costa Rica</li> <li>• H.E. Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda, Deputy Minister responsible for National Strategic Development Planning and SDG focal point, Republic of Tajikistan</li> <li>• Ms. Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator in Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Mia Seppo, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh</li> <li>• Ms. Laia Bonet, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona for the Agenda 2030, the Digital Transition, Sports, Territorial and Metropolitan Coordination, and International Relations, Spain</li> <li>• Mr. LI Jiangtao, Deputy Director-General of Department of Public Administration, CNAG</li> <li>• Mr. Patrick Osakwe, Chief of Trade and Poverty Branch, UNCTAD, Geneva</li> <li>• Ms. Sabina Alkire, Director of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Oxford University</li> <li>• Mr. Adil Ababou, Manager of the Political Economy and Governance Sector, The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab(J-PAL), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)</li> </ul>
10:35–10:55 am	<b>Open Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Panelists</b> to highlight 1-3 recommendations on how public institutions can be strengthened to eradicate poverty.</li> <li>• <b>Q&amp;A from audience</b></li> </ul>
10:55–11:00 am	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Wrap up by the moderator</b></li> </ul>