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**Relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable
development to practices and results**

Relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to practices and results

Note by the Secretariat

* E/C.16/2019/1.



Summary

At its seventeenth session, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration agreed on a set of 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development, building on the conceptual framework presented at the sixteenth session, with the essential elements of Sustainable Development Goal 16, namely, effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness, at its core.

The principles, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution [2018/12](#), highlight the need for pragmatic and ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, the principles are linked to a variety of commonly used strategies for operationalizing responsive and effective governance, many of which have been recognized and endorsed over the years in various United Nations forums, resolutions and treaties.

At the eighteenth session, the Committee will continue to identify and review technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, including from sectoral perspectives, and consider further ways to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard.

The present discussion paper, prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with Committee members Geert Bouckaert, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Ali Hamsa, Joan Mendez, Louis Meuleman, Juraj Nemec and Moni Pizani, is aimed at outlining an inclusive, collaborative process for building strong institutions at all levels and enriching global policy advice on issues in governance and public administration, both with a view to strengthening evidence-based and action-oriented support for the implementation of and follow-up on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee's attention is drawn in particular to a draft framework for elaborating guidance on the commonly used strategies in areas in which programmatic guidance may be needed in order to advance work led by an informal working group of the Committee in this area. Given the comprehensive nature of the draft framework, an indication of relative priorities could also be helpful.

The Committee is also invited to consider ways of linking the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to related work on indicators at three levels of analysis. At the highest level, it is suggested that the Committee associate each of the principles with a subset of indicators from the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, as illustrated in the annex to the paper. It is further suggested that the Committee assess and contribute to an extended set of governance indicators in continuing collaboration with the Praia Group on Governance Statistics. Lastly, the Committee could encourage those concerned to identify indicators that countries use to monitor practices and results at the level of commonly used strategies.

I. Background

1. At its fifteenth session, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration discussed the possibility of developing a set of internationally recognized principles of responsible and effective governance that could provide helpful guidance to countries in addressing a broad range of governance challenges associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While good governance and related concepts, such as the rule of law, participation, accountability and transparency, have been frequently noted in international commitments and agreements, the Committee found them to be general in nature and open to interpretation. It therefore decided to draft, with the assistance of the Secretariat, a set of voluntary governance principles, with a view to providing a baseline for future policy and practice and encouraging the study of more specific issues in public administration.

2. The Committee continued its consideration of the matter at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions and, in April 2018, adopted a set of 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development, as contained in the Committee's sessional report (E/2018/44, chap. III.B, para. 31).¹ The essential elements of effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of Sustainable Development Goal 16 are at the core of the principles framework. The basic principles comprise the following: (a) competence, sound policymaking and cooperation under the rubric of effectiveness; (b) integrity, transparency and independent oversight under accountability; and (c) leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity and intergenerational equity under inclusiveness.

3. In adopting the principles, the Committee stressed that the principles must have a practical application and that they be aimed at bringing together and promoting the further development of relevant standards and operational guidelines in all areas of institution-building that are relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As basic principles, they apply to all public institutions, including the administration of executive, legislative and judicial organs at all levels, the security and justice sectors, independent constitutional and regulatory bodies and State corporations. The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

4. By its resolution 2018/12, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements and endorsed the principles of effective governance for sustainable development as an initial reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Against this broad background, the Economic and Social Council also encouraged the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, following a well-defined process for assessing the relevance of a practice to the principles and the evidence of impact, including from sectoral perspectives, and to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard.

¹ See the terms of reference of the working group on interlinkages of Sustainable Development Goals statistics to allow for integrated analyses in the monitoring, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Working-Group-ToR--Interlinkages.pdf>.

6. The Committee has responded by organizing an informal working group of members with the objective of identifying and reviewing relevant technical guidelines, supporting the use of the principles in a Sustainable Development Goal audit model, developing indicators for each of the principles and documenting methods for evaluating strategies and practices. The working group is supported by the Committee secretariat in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

7. The ongoing work of the Committee on elaborating the principles framework serves a dual purpose: to outline an inclusive, collaborative process for building strong institutions at all levels and to enrich its policy advice on issues in governance and public administration, both with a view to strengthening evidence-based and action-oriented support for the implementation of and follow-up on the 2030 Agenda. Issues are identified in the present paper that have arisen in connection with the activities of the working group. The paper, prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with Committee members Geert Bouckaert, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Ali Hamsa, Joan Mendez, Louis Meuleman, Juraj Nemec and Moni Pizani, is provided in support of the Committee's further deliberations on the principles of effective governance for sustainable development at the eighteenth session.

II. Identifying practices to operationalize the principles

A. Expanding on commonly used strategies

8. The Committee has recognized that the principles need to be useful to people involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and various other commitments who would like to make specific governance improvements in accordance with their own needs and priorities and who are seeking reliable action-oriented guidance.

9. As communicated at the seventeenth session, a range of commonly used strategies for addressing important governance challenges have been explored in past sessions, such as building a professional civil service or promoting integrated policymaking to enhance effectiveness, ensuring the independence of the auditing function or expanding the availability of open government data to strengthen accountability, and institutionalizing participation mechanisms or strengthening local finance to foster inclusiveness. Many such strategies have been recognized and endorsed over the years in the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in the outcomes of major United Nations conference and summits and in the relevant treaties on human rights or corruption prevention. At the same time, ensuring the full success of such strategies has remained a challenge in many countries ([E/C.16/2018/5](#), para. 10).

10. The provision of guidance on operationalization of the strategies is intended to respond to various demands. In general, additional guidance on the strategies is needed to assist government officials and senior advisers in policy and planning at the national and subnational levels to identify and understand the basic concepts behind the strategies. It is apparent from deliberations among the experts themselves and the vast extent of the literature on public administration that knowledge of governance domains can be quite specialized. Knowledge of one area of expertise does not always imply in-depth knowledge of another area, for example, in public sector workforce matters and risk management or regulatory impact analysis.

11. The Committee has identified 62 such strategies, each associated with 1 of the 11 principles. The elaboration of technical guidance by the working group is intended to assist government officials and senior advisers in policy and planning at the national and subnational levels to identify and understand the basic concepts behind

the strategies and the main factors underpinning implementation. The commonly used strategies are shown in the annex to the present paper.

12. Some strategies are multifaceted. There may also be important interlinkages among the strategies, and some strategies could be associated with more than one principle. While it is not the purpose of the current exercise to produce a complex mapping of linkages, a common understanding of concepts and main factors underpinning the implementation of each strategy could assist in seeing the full picture of institution-building, sharing findings of common interest and pursuing priorities accordingly.

13. In addition, it may be helpful to identify the factors, determinants and challenges related to uptake and, in making international comparisons, useful to have an assessment of the extent to which each strategy is being pursued in the public sector worldwide, while recognizing that authoritative global surveys may not always be available. As indicated in previous deliberations of the Committee, the guidance could helpfully be illustrated with case studies and promising approaches observed at the national and subnational levels. Moreover, identifying opportunities to connect with others through international cooperation and access to peer-to-peer learning and research could accelerate the achievement of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

14. Indicative elements of the draft framework are provided in the table below for discussion.

Table

Draft framework for guidance on commonly used strategies

<i>Component</i>	<i>Content</i>
Understanding the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of the commonly used strategies enumerated in the principles of effective governance for sustainable development • What is the strategy and of what type (e.g., planning, learning, competition)? • What is the underlying theory of change? How can the strategy be of benefit and under what circumstances?
World public sector situation and trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global and regional assessments of the extent to which the strategy has been or is being implemented by countries, where known • Are there continuing or emerging trends to be aware of at the global level or within different economic/geographic groups? • Does available research provide evidence of impact? • Which indicators do countries tend to use to monitor reforms in this area? • Both national and subnational levels could be considered
Methods of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the basic building blocks of the strategy? • Are there international standards and methods or common approaches followed by different economic/geographic groups? • Do current approaches work well or are other methods/instruments needed?
Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country case studies at national and subnational levels describing experiences with the methods of implementation described above

<i>Component</i>	<i>Content</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases that reflect highly promising innovations in methods or approaches could be considered for inclusion
Peer-to-peer learning and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main international practitioner networks, if any? • What are the main international research networks, if any? • What type of peer-to-peer tools are known to be successful in this area and under what circumstances?
International development cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What multilateral technical assistance is available to countries interested in pursuing the strategy, taking into account national realities, capacities and levels of development?

15. The Committee may wish to consider whether this framework would be useful in supporting its role in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance on issues relating to governance and public administration in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Given the comprehensive nature of the draft framework, an indication of relative priorities could also be helpful.

B. Engaging global experts and all relevant stakeholders

16. Technical guidance could be based on global expert opinion for quality assurance and systematically involve relevant organizations. Consensus-building among global experts and stakeholders would also be important to avoid an indiscriminate approach to guidance on commonly used strategies and key to successful implementation in various development contexts. An illustrative selection of technical guidance and expert entities is contained in the note by the Secretariat on elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development prepared for the seventeenth session (E/C.16/2018/5, annex II).

17. While academic and research communities have a real interest in the 2030 Agenda and the vision behind it, some are of the view that their research has insufficient influence on the setting of international norms. In promoting consensus-building among global experts, there may be substantial opportunities to tap into this potential contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals in some cases, recognizing that perspectives, incentives and expertise may vary considerably across areas of interest.

18. A related matter concerns the interface between international research communities and global advisory bodies such as the Committee, as well as between national or subnational networks and policymaking functions. Where there is limited coordination between technical experts and operating units, there may be risks to the dissemination and uptake of the findings of leading-edge policy research that could support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee could consider proposing a way forward in this regard.

19. Moreover, the validity and legitimacy of policy research most commonly relates to the selection of subjects, measurement of outcomes and protection against bias. In assessing the relevance of research to the commonly used strategies, care could be taken to ensure that methodological choices are grounded in evidence and that research designs and approaches are fit for purpose, participatory and practice-oriented and likely to generate the intended outcomes. Internal and external peer

review, following a well-defined process, may be essential to assure the quality of future Committee guidance on operationalization of the principles.

20. To enhance relevance and accelerate implementation, it could also be beneficial to engage those stakeholders who may be among the primary users. The experience of the International Organization for Standardization and the Statistical Commission, among others, demonstrates that involving the actual users of technical guidance notes in their production can greatly enhance the relevance and reach of such guidance. This may imply the involvement of a wide range of experts and practitioners in many fields of public administration interacting in groups and subgroups in which there is sufficient interest. The Committee may wish to consider the methods of selection and types of partners and stakeholders and different engagement modalities.

21. There may be some urgency to take up relevant strategies by interested Governments, given the limited time frame of the 2030 Agenda. A first step could be to continue to identify relevant existing international norms and standards in relation to each strategy. Based on this, the Committee could focus its work on areas in which processes, norms and standards are not already in place or in which relevant norms and standards could be better aligned with the principles of effective governance.

22. One example of expert interest and engagement relates to the inclusion of a contribution to the 2030 Agenda as a cross-cutting priority of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions development initiative for the period 2017–2022. It has launched a comprehensive capacity development programme on auditing preparedness for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the context of each country's specific sustainable development efforts and the individual mandates of each supreme audit institution. The preparedness audits provide independent and evidence-based information that Governments do not always have through other channels. The model for the preparedness audits is aligned with the voluntary guidelines for the preparation of the voluntary national reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development. More than 70 supreme audit institutions from all regions are participating in the programme, including one subnational audit institution.

23. Across different regions, levels of development and national contexts, the audits have identified similar challenges in how Governments have prepared for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. These include deficiencies in long-term strategic planning, limited attention to policy synergies, unclear definition of roles and responsibilities, weak accountability lines, siloed budget planning and implementation, unclear engagement and communication strategies, and lack of integrated mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, among others. These results confirm that the achievement of the Goals will require addressing long-standing challenges for public institutions and sustainable development such as policy integration, risk management, stakeholder engagement and monitoring and evaluation.

24. The International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions plans to continue the initiative by providing support to supreme audit institutions in auditing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, beginning with the development, testing and dissemination of a dedicated audit model for this purpose. The International Organization has expressed interest in exploring how the principles of effective governance for sustainable development can be incorporated into such a model and has invited the Committee to join the initiative through the Committee's informal working group.

III. Linking the principles to work on governance indicators

A. Governance indicators in the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework

25. While successful strategies to improve governance capabilities can be observed in all regions, there are no guarantees. Many countries pursuing reform strategies face growing inequalities, a lack of trust in government, systemic corruption or even violence. Pursuing reform strategies that work is pivotal, but what are the key decisions? What are the lessons learned from the experience of others?

26. Indicators of results are one way of guiding such decisions. Linking the principles with related work on indicators can help interested Governments to gauge the extent of effective governance for sustainable development at the national and subnational levels and compare reform policies undertaken in pursuit of governance objectives with others. In this case, standardized indicators could enable targeted comparisons of reform policies and are most useful as an analytical tool when seen in the context of the social, economic and environmental conditions under which a Government operates.

27. Indicators of effective governance for sustainable development should be fully compatible with and supplementary to the global Sustainable Development Goal indicators adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 71/313, annex). The indicators associated with the institutional targets of the Goals are clearly relevant (targets 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.10 and 16.b). The same may be true for the targets under Goal 17 on the means of implementation that are key enablers of effective governance (targets 17.1, 17.14, 17.16, 17.17, 17.18 and 17.19).

28. The Statistical Commission has observed that, while each Sustainable Development Goal and target represents a different facet of sustainable development, many of these Goals and targets are related and progress on one Goal can affect progress on another.² By extension, a complex web of interlinkages among Goal indicators may also be seen in the global indicator framework for the Goals. An examination of the 232 indicators on which general agreement has been reached shows that interlinkages with the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, and the institutional aspects of Goal 16 in general, are widespread (targets 4.7, 5.1, 5.c, 6.5, 6.b, 11.3, 11.4, 11.7, 11.a, 11.b, 12.7, 12.8, 13.2, 13.3, 14.2, 14.5, 14.6, 14.c, 15.1, 15.4, 15.6, 15.9, 15.a, 15.b, 16.4 and 16.9).

29. The global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework thus provides a rich starting point for the identification of indicators of principles of effective governance for sustainable development. Many of the principles are reflected in the agreed global indicator framework. This is an expression of the integrated, intergenerational perspective of the Goals and spirit of global partnership on which implementation of the 2030 Agenda is based. A preliminary selection of the global indicators relating to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development is provided for discussion by the Committee in the annex.

30. The Committee may wish to consider whether a selection of the agreed global Sustainable Development Goal indicators, such as those shown in the annex, linked to the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, could comprise

² See the terms of reference of the working group on interlinkages of Sustainable Development Goals statistics to allow for integrated analyses in the monitoring, Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/Working-Group-ToR--Interlinkages.pdf>.

a useful tool for assessing progress, trends and gaps in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

31. When considering the relationship between the principles of effective governance and the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework, the Committee may wish to bear in mind that several of the indicators shown in the annex are categorized as tier III. Tier III refers to indicators for which no internationally agreed standards and methodologies are yet available but are being developed by various international organizations acting as custodian agencies for the indicators within their relevant domains of expertise.

32. In addition, where global indicators are concerned, the Committee may wish to focus on evidence of the principles themselves, as outcomes, rather than the more specific strategies to operationalize them. The reasons for this are twofold.

33. First, the Committee has underscored that, with regard to building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, an emphasis should be placed on outcomes rather than rules and on encouraging innovation and experimentation in the performance of government functions. The principles are intended to be helpful as a guide to countries, regardless of development context or governance model, and make no reference themselves to administrative structures, levels of revenue and expenditure, operational strategies or forms of economic, social and environmental regulation. Comparisons that draw on such indicators should take development contexts into account and refer to causal factors in explaining outcomes.

34. Second, structural indicators (e.g., ratification of a treaty or establishment of a specific body) and process indicators (e.g., proportion of administrative units audited) may be less revealing as markers of sustainable development. Structural and process indicators may nevertheless be useful to countries as a point of reference in developing a broader range of governance statistics in specific contexts, as well as at the level of operational strategies. These additional layers are discussed in sections B and C below.

35. In early 2020, a comprehensive review of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework will be undertaken by the Statistical Commission based on a proposal from the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators that is to be finalized in November 2019. The review will consider adjusting or replacing an indicator if it has been found that the indicator does not map well to the target and may recommend deleting selected tier III indicators from the global framework in cases in which the methodological development has stalled or has not produced expected results. Additional indicators will be considered only in exceptional cases when it is found that a crucial aspect of a target or critical emerging issue is not being monitored within the existing indicator framework. The review will be aimed at maintaining the same number of indicators currently in the framework (between one and three per target) so as not to alter significantly the original framework that already is being implemented in most countries and not increase the reporting burden on national statistical systems.

36. Open consultations on the preliminary list of possible deletions, replacements, adjustments and additions are expected to be held between May and July 2019. The Committee may wish to reflect on whether it would like to contribute any views on the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework in the lead-up to the 2020 comprehensive review, specifically in relation to targets 16.6, 16.7 and 17.14 or other targets, as appropriate.

B. Collaboration with the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

37. The global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework is limited, by design, to essential indicators with an adequate methodological foundation and prospect of data availability among 193 countries. Typically, there are one or two indicators for each target. This leaves many dimensions of the 2030 Agenda with very general quantitative indicators of progress at the global level.

38. To assist countries in the production of a broader range of governance statistics and expand opportunities for comparative analysis of policy reforms, in accordance with national priorities, the Praia Group on Governance Statistics is to develop a handbook that can serve as a reference framework for the production of governance statistics covering the conceptualization, measurement methodology and dissemination of governance statistics for national statistical offices.³

39. An initial exchange on the potential interaction between the work of the Committee on the principles of effective governance and the work of the Statistical Commission on governance statistics took place at the seventeenth session of Committee, in April 2018.

40. A first question in the selection of complementary indicators would be what is meant by governance. Governance indicators – and underlying this, the definition of governance – have been contested, quite strongly sometimes, for a variety of reasons, including because they can have a material impact on countries (e.g., when they have been used as criteria for aid allocation or for treaty accession, or affect investors' choices). Where there are different normative positions, such as those in governance, multiple reference points emerge. The principles of effective governance for sustainable development provide one such conceptual framework that, in the view of the Committee, embodies the vision of the 2030 Agenda and builds on a wide range of United Nations agreements over many years.

41. The Praia Group had identified nine dimensions of governance as of October 2018. These dimensions are still being explored in depth, but, based on an initial scan by interested Committee members, it appears that there may be a high degree of conceptual consistency with the principles framework, notwithstanding some differences in terminology. This is especially the case with respect to the principles of competence (responsiveness and government effectiveness in the Praia Group dimensions), integrity (absence of corruption), transparency (openness) and participation (participation), as well as leaving no one behind and non-discrimination (human rights). It could be expected that the Praia Group handbook will be especially valuable in developing a broader set of governance indicators in these areas.

42. At the same time, some principles of effective governance appear to be underplayed in the Praia Group content, namely, collaboration, independent oversight, subsidiarity and intergenerational equity. The Committee may consider focusing initial attention on gaps in these areas, while acknowledging that some aspects may not be well understood, for example, how to determine an optimal level of sharing of responsibility for government functions between national and subnational levels or how to measure intergenerational equity, while other areas may be relatively well studied.

43. Safety and security and access to and quality of justice, which are also at the core of the Praia Group initiative, could be considered from an institutional

³ The United Nations Development Programme, through the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, is also responsible for proposing methodologies for tier III indicators 16.6.2, 16.7.1, 16.7.2 and 16.b.1. See note by the Secretary-General on the report of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics (E/CN.3/2018/34).

perspective by the Committee. The Department of Peace Operations (formerly the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have also been active in suggesting common indicators of public order and safety and have produced an implementation guide on rule of law indicators, which is intended to help to assess the capacity, performance, integrity, transparency and accountability of law enforcement agencies, the courts and corrections services. The suggested indicators can also be used to monitor how vulnerable social groups are treated by these institutions.⁴

44. Similar opportunities may exist for linking the principles framework to internationally comparable statistics in other sectors, such as education, health and employment, again bearing in mind that each set of indicators may have been developed for a specific purpose. While the education sector may put relative emphasis on inputs (e.g., expenditure, personnel and enrolment) and outputs (e.g., levels of educational attainment),⁵ the health sector may give relatively more attention to process and outcomes (e.g., health status, risk factors, service coverage and health systems)⁶ and the employment sector may give more attention to outcomes connected with the labour market (e.g., employment status, working time, wages and occupational safety) (see E/CN.3/2018/18).

45. The Praia Group is expected to deliver its report to the Statistical Commission in early 2020. The United Nations Development Programme, OHCHR, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank Group, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century have substantial expertise in the production and dissemination of governance-related indicators and are among the leading contributors to the handbook being prepared by the Praia Group. Indicators developed by other regional organizations, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, could also be considered.

46. The Committee may also wish to reflect on the conceptual links between the nine governance dimensions of the Praia Group and the framework endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in the principles of effective governance, with a view to promoting coherence of the work of the Committee and the Statistical Commission.

C. Indicators at the level of commonly used strategies

47. A third level of indicator that the Committee could consider relates to interventions at the level of commonly used strategies, as suggested in the table above. This level is not covered by the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework and may not be covered by the extended set of governance indicators under development by the Praia Group.

48. The Committee could consider whether this additional degree of indicator granularity would facilitate efforts to operationalize the principles. If so, interested networks of global experts and other stakeholders could be encouraged to develop the requisite methodologies, especially where they do not exist or have not been subjected

⁴ See *United Nations Rule of Law Indicators: Implementation Guide and Project Tools* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.11.I.13).

⁵ See UNESCO Institute of Statistics, “Education indicators: technical guidelines” (Paris, November 2009).

⁶ See World Health Organization, “Global reference list of 100 core health indicators” (Geneva, 2015).

to peer review, and identify global custodians for strategy-level indicators within their relevant domains of expertise.

49. Aside from the potential for knowledge-sharing, the development of indicators at the level of strategies could help interested countries to identify gaps in the availability of relevant administrative data, which may vary considerably among and within countries depending, among other things, on existing legal and regulatory requirements, institutional capacity and administrative processes. Some countries have substantial previous experience in governance monitoring, while others face considerable challenges when drawing from administrative sources to measure the impact of institutional reforms.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

50. By the time of the eighteenth session of the Committee, the world will be well into the fourth year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Initial indications are that, in some areas, progress is insufficient to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets by 2030. This is especially true for the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Experience shows that policy reforms to strengthen much-needed governance capabilities call for concerted effort and bold structural changes. At the same time, many specific improvements in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions implemented incrementally over a period of years can yield important long-term results.

51. Guidance on practices to achieve effective governance for sustainable development, however, remains scattered and indications of results uneven. The set of basic principles developed by the Committee and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council provide an important foundation that countries may wish to reaffirm, while availing themselves of international technical guidelines that have been developed according to strictly professional considerations and that are known to be effective under similar conditions.

52. There is no straight line from principles of effective governance for sustainable development to practices. The principles require adaptation and tailoring to what works best in a given situation; it is the mix that matters. Such a contextualized governance approach, which goes beyond blueprinting and copying, reduces costly failures, looks at the short-, medium- and long-term impact and may be accepted more widely when it respects existing values and traditions. The great transformations that are needed call for bold decisions that can be carried through only when those who are governed feel included and understood by those who govern. Operationalizing the principles requires concrete strategies and indicators, along with savvy leadership within political, administrative and stakeholder organizations.

53. To these ends, it is recommended that the Committee undertake the following:

(a) Comment on the draft framework for guidance on commonly used strategies shown in the table above and, if found useful, provide an initial indication of research priorities, taking into account the Committee's role in advising the Economic and Social Council on how public administrations can support the achievement and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Through its informal working group and in an inclusive manner, together with all relevant stakeholders, continue to identify and review technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, including from sectoral perspectives, and consider further ways to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard;

- (c) Promote strengthened collaboration among professionals in the relevant specialized disciplines, which has proven to be an important determinant of both the quality of resultant technical guidelines and their legitimacy;
- (d) Encourage academic research networks to focus on Goal-related outcomes in general and on the operationalization of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in particular, and facilitate efforts in this regard;
- (e) Associate a set of global Goal indicators, or other indicators as appropriate, with each of the principles, as illustrated in the annex, with a view to contributing to strengthening the analytical basis for assessing the impact of reform policies on building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
- (f) Assess and contribute to an extended set of governance indicators to help interested Governments to gauge the extent of effective governance for sustainable development at the national and subnational levels and compare strategies undertaken in pursuit of governance objectives with others;
- (g) Advise on ways to analyse the impact of the basic norms embodied in the principles on the achievement of the Goals in different development contexts and, similarly, the strength of the impact of the commonly used strategies on the operationalization of each principle;
- (h) Take further steps to promote collaboration with the Praia Group on Governance Statistics, the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions development initiative and other actors, harmonize efforts to support the achievement of the Goals and ensure that all relevant stakeholders are working towards the same end, purpose and effect;
- (i) Encourage the members of the Committee to assume leadership roles in the advancement of the global understanding and application of commonly used strategies to operationalize the principles of effective governance within their relevant areas of expertise.

Annex

Principles of effective governance for sustainable development in the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
Effectiveness		
Competence: To perform their functions effectively, institutions are to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority	16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)	• Promotion of a professional public sector workforce
	16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)	• Strategic human resources management
	16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services ^c	• Leadership development and training of civil servants
	17.1.1 Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source	• Performance management
Sound policymaking: To achieve their intended results, public policies are to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense	17.1.2 Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes	• Results-based management
	17.14.1 Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development ^c	• Financial management and control
	17.18.2 Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics	• Efficient and fair revenue administration
	17.18.3 Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding	• Investment in e-government
	17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries	• Strategic planning and foresight
		• Regulatory impact analysis
		• Promotion of coherent policymaking
		• Strengthening national statistical systems
		• Monitoring and evaluation systems
		• Science-policy interface
		• Risk management frameworks
		• Data sharing

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
<p>Collaboration: To address problems of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect</p>	17.19.2 Proportion of countries that (a) have conducted at least one population and housing census in the last 10 years; and (b) have achieved 100 per cent birth registration and 80 per cent death registration	
	4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment ^c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre of government coordination under the Head of State or Government • Collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas
	6.5.1 Degree of integrated water resources management implementation (0–100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals
	6.5.2 Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network-based governance • Multi-stakeholder partnerships
	12.8.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development (including climate change education) are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment ^c	
	13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula ^c	
	13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions ^c	

Principle	Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion ^a	Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle ^b
	<p>17.16.1 Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals</p> <p>17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to (a) public-private partnerships and (b) civil society partnerships^c</p>	
Accountability		
Integrity: 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	<p>16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months</p> <p>16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants
Transparency: To ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, institutions are 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 are provided by law	16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive disclosure of information • Budget transparency • Open government data • Registries of beneficial ownership • Lobby registries
Independent oversight: To retain trust in government, oversight agencies are to act according to strictly professional considerations and apart from and unaffected by others		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies • Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies • Independent audit • Respect for legality

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
Inclusiveness		
Leaving no one behind: To ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies are to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination	<p>1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups</p> <p>15.6.1 Number of countries that have adopted legislative, administrative and policy frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits [arising from the utilization of genetic resources]</p> <p>17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy • Promotion of social equity • Data disaggregation • Systematic follow-up and review
Non-discrimination: To respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, access to public service is to be provided on general terms of equality, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status	<p>5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex</p> <p>5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p> <p>16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions^c</p> <p>16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age</p> <p>16.b.1 Proportion of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law (same as 10.3.1)^c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of public sector workforce diversity • Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery • Multilingual service delivery • Accessibility standards • Cultural audit of institutions • Universal birth registration • Gender-responsive budgeting

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
<p>Participation: To have an effective State, all significant political groups should be actively involved in matters that directly affect them and have a chance to influence policy</p>	<p>5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments</p> <p>6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management</p> <p>11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group^c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and fair elections • Regulatory process of public consultation • Multi-stakeholder forums • Participatory budgeting • Community-driven development
<p>Subsidiarity: To promote government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level</p>	<p>11.a.1 Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city^c</p> <p>11.b.2 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies (same as 13.1.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal federalism • Strengthening urban governance • Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems • Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks • Multilevel governance
<p>Intergenerational equity: To promote prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions should construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations</p>	<p>11.3.1 Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate</p> <p>11.4.1 Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)^c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development impact assessment • Long-term public debt management • Long-term territorial planning and spatial development • Ecosystem management

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
	11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities ^c	
	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans	
	13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)	
	14.2.1 Proportion of national exclusive economic zones managed using ecosystem-based approaches ^c	
	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	
	14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	
	14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources ^c	
	15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area	

<i>Principle</i>	<i>Related global Sustainable Development Goal indicators – for discussion^a</i>	<i>Commonly used strategies to operationalize the principle^b</i>
	15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type	
	15.2.1 Progress towards sustainable forest management	
	15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity	
	15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 ^c	
	15.a.1 Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (same as 15.b.1) ^c	
	17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services	

^a From the annex to General Assembly resolution [71/313](#).

^b In its resolution 2018/12, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the principles of effective governance for sustainable development contained in the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session as an initial reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals ([E/2018/44](#), para. 31). The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

^c Tier III indicator under review by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.