



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee of Experts on Public Administration

### Nineteenth session

30 March–3 April 2020

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

### Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

#### Annotated provisional agenda

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10. Training and awareness-raising for the Sustainable Development Goals.
11. Provisional agenda for the twentieth session of the Committee.
12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its nineteenth session.

#### Annotations

##### 1. Election of officers

The Committee will elect a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur for the nineteenth session. The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur constitute the Bureau. In accordance with established practice, the officers will continue to act as the Bureau



during the intersessional period that follows the nineteenth session, in preparation for the twentieth session.

**2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters**

The Committee is invited to adopt the agenda of the nineteenth session on the basis of the provisional agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2019/229.

The Committee is scheduled to meet from Monday to Friday, 30 March to 3 April 2020. The morning meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the afternoon meetings from 3 to 6 p.m. Informal meetings and events may be held at other times.

*Documentation*

Annotated provisional agenda ([E/C.16/2020/1](#))

**3. Informal report on intersessional activities of the Committee and its members**

The Committee members will be invited to present brief oral reports on activities related to the work of the Committee that they have undertaken during the intersessional period, from April 2019 to March 2020.

No advance documentation is expected.

**4. Institutional aspects of the 2020 theme of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development**

The theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development for 2020 and of the Council for the 2020 session will be “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. The Committee will consider the theme from a governance and public administration perspective and adopt its contribution to the high-level political forum under the agenda item.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on promoting effective governance and institutional reform to accelerate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/C.16/2020/2](#))

**5. Dialogue with voluntary national review countries on Sustainable Development Goal 16**

At its nineteenth session, the Committee will invite two voluntary national review countries from each region to engage in an interactive dialogue with the experts on the institutional aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 16, taking into account the interlinkages between Goal 16 and the other Sustainable Development Goals. This will include reflections by the experts on the use of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in July 2018, as a guide to transformative pathways to realize the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. The experts will be invited to prepare questions and comments for consideration based on country inputs, identify challenges and provide proposals that could contribute to accelerated actions to achieve the Goals.

*Documentation*

Informal conference room paper on dialogue with voluntary national review countries on Sustainable Development Goal 16

**6. Effective governance for sustainable development: putting principles into practice and reviewing outcomes**

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

The principles, endorsed by the 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 its eighteenth session, the Committee continued its discussion of technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, including from sectoral perspectives, and considered further ways to engage relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in that regard. The Committee also considered linking the principles with related work on indicators, with a view to contributing to strengthening the analytical basis for assessing the impact of reform policies on building strong institutions and achieving the Goals.

At its nineteenth session, the Committee will focus its discussion on connecting the principles to regional and national actions to build strong institutions for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Work on a benchmark study on the status of implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development in Africa will be presented by the African Peer Review Mechanism. In addition, the Committee will consider the question of reviewing outcomes with reference, inter alia, to recent developments in the field of governance indicators and auditing of Sustainable Development Goal implementation.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat entitled “Effective governance for sustainable development: putting principles into practice and reviewing outcomes” ([E/C.16/2020/3](#))

**7. Government and public sector workforce of the future**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee discussed the challenges of building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels and readying institutions and policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee observed, inter alia, that efforts to rally civil servants and the broader public sector workforce around the Sustainable Development Goals and instil a sense of commitment could be strengthened, along with new ways of working on the basis of participation and engagement. The Committee also observed that new policy and technical skills would be required in the public sector, given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement and the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Goals.

At the eighteenth session, the Committee pointed to the enabling role that critical thinking, complexity thinking, futures thinking and design thinking, in addition to deliberative skills, emotional intelligence and appropriate use of frontier

technologies, could play in delivering innovative public services and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Committee will continue its consideration of matters relating to the government and public sector workforce of the future at its nineteenth session.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on the government and public sector workforce of the future ([E/C.16/2020/4](#))

**8. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and providing access to justice for all**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee considered the question of stakeholder engagement in post-conflict countries. It concluded, inter alia, that re-establishing legitimacy and trust were major challenges faced by post-conflict societies, where certain groups might have been systematically excluded and military, police and other institutions might be associated with repressive or corrupt practices.

At its eighteenth session, the Committee expanded its consideration of the institutional aspects of the security and justice sectors with a discussion of the underlying issues in promoting security and access to justice for all and ways to support the institution-building aims of Goal 16 in those areas.

In its resolution [70/262](#), on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the General Assembly stressed the importance of closer cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, and encouraged the Commission to draw on the expertise of relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council, as appropriate. At its nineteenth session, the Committee will be invited to reflect on rebuilding credible governance and public administration systems after conflict, with a view to contributing, through the Council and in accordance with its mandate, to the work of the Commission from a medium- to long-term perspective.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on the re-establishment of credible governance and public administration institutions and systems after conflict ([E/C.16/2020/5](#))

**9. Emerging issues in public financial management and budgeting for the Sustainable Development Goals**

At its seventeenth session, the Committee discussed issues related to effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources and observed that building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels, together with adequate oversight capacity, remained a major challenge.

The Committee recommended that the Goals be mainstreamed into national finance strategies to bridge the gap between policy priorities and actual government spending and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that the achievement of sustainable development did not depend on aid alone. The timely and regular production, publication and wide dissemination of executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and other budget reports should be considered, along with budget guides for citizens that were simple to understand and accessible. Effective participatory budgeting and the formulation of indicators to monitor progress were also important.

At its eighteenth session, the Committee recalled that strengthening fiscal management at the national and subnational levels was integral to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted that sound fiscal management

entailed full ownership of domestic and international flows, reduction of illicit financial flows and corruption, strengthened fiscal transparency through open and collaborative budgeting processes, participatory and performance-based budgeting, and fiscal decentralization commensurate with subnational institutional capacity and arrangements in a given country.

The Committee will consider the particular question of budgeting for the Sustainable Development Goals at the nineteenth session.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on budgeting for the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/C.16/2020/6](#))

#### **10. Training and awareness-raising for the Sustainable Development Goals**

At its eighteenth session, the Committee noted that Governments could consider investing in the continuous training of the public sector workforce in competencies for the public sector workforce of the future. Civil service commissions and schools and institutes of public administration could consider including related skills development in training programmes. Similarly, raising awareness of the principles through civic education in schools and other educational institutions could be considered. The Committee underscored that engaging tertiary and professional training institutes and communities could be helpful in connection with promoting the operationalization of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development at the country level.

Recalling past discussions on the role of local authorities in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee stressed that local governments were well placed to design and implement solutions at the grassroots level, for example local housing solutions for the homeless, and that capacity-building for local governments and training of locally elected officials remained a critical concern in making progress towards the achievement of the Goals.

The Committee will be invited to consider further questions related to training for public officials on the Sustainable Development Goals under this item.

*Documentation*

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on training for public officials on the Sustainable Development Goals ([E/C.16/2020/7](#))

#### **11. Provisional agenda for the twentieth session of the Committee**

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/305](#), the Committee should adopt a theme for its twentieth session that is aligned with the main theme of the 2021 high-level political forum and the Council, while continuing to address issues necessary to discharge its other functions. The Committee may wish to consider the draft provisional agenda for the twentieth session in this light.

The Committee may also wish to consider engaging in further reflection on a provisional programme of work for the period from April 2020 to July 2021 and on the related terms of reference of its informal working groups. Members could consider whether doing so would help to organize their work and enhance the profile of the Committee within the United Nations system through the forward-looking study of critical issues in governance and public administration relevant to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

**12. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its nineteenth session**

The Committee will adopt a report to be submitted to the Council on the work of its nineteenth session. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/305](#), the work of the Committee should reflect the need for an integrated and action-oriented approach to the Sustainable Development Goals and build on a solid evidence-based review of progress on the 2030 Agenda.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [68/1](#), the Committee should include in its report an executive summary, and the report should be concise and clearly identify the conclusions and recommendations and issues that might require attention and/or action by the Council.

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