**Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia
to the United Nations**

Symposium on the

"Promotion of an inclusive and accountable public administration for sustainable development"

16-17 March 2016

Cochabamba, Bolivia

Organized by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia
together with the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM)
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and
in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Aide-Mémoire

English

1. SPONSORSHIP AND PURPOSE

The Symposium on the "Promotion of an inclusive and accountable public administration for sustainable development", which will be held from 16 to 17 March 2016 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, is organized by the Government of Plurinational State of Bolivia, together with the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Symposium will provide high-level public officials from Latin America and the Caribbean a platform to share knowledge of innovative practices and lessons learned on how to build an inclusive and accountable public administration for the achievement of sustainable development. It is expected that over 400 participants will attend this capacity development event, including Ministers, government officials, representatives of the United Nations, regional development banks, academia and other relevant organizations.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1. Background

We are at a critical time in history as we are witnessing complex and inter-dependent social, economic and environmental challenges, which are posing great risks to the sustainability of our planet. "These problems are not accidents of nature or the results of phenomena beyond our control. They result from actions and omissions of people – public institutions, the private sector, and others charged with protecting human rights and upholding human dignity."[1]

While the challenges are many, so are the opportunities. Three United Nations global conferences in 2015 have set the stage for international cooperation in advancing the 2030 agenda, and assisting Member States to develop action plans to promote sustainable development. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2015. The United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda was held in September 2015 to formally adopt a new set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). From 30th November to 11th December 2015, the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) took place in Paris where Member States adopted an agreement on the long-term reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, a common transformative vision based on solidarity, accountability and shared responsibility will guide governments, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders in their efforts to eradicate poverty and promote a better world for all. The SDGs will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in the area of People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, and Partnership. The 2030 Agenda envisages a world in which "democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling environment at the national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger" (A/RES/70/1, para. 9). It highlights that "sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.

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[1] Synthesis Report, 2014, para. 12,

The new Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice and that are based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions" (A/RES/70/1, para. 35). Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda specifically calls for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. It also encourages Member States to both "integrate the SDGs into their national development strategies and plans, taking into account levels of development and capacities, and to devise a robust monitoring and review framework" (idem, para. 21). The United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/327, adopted in September 2015, further emphasizes the growing need to strengthen public institutions and public services in support of sustainable development and reaffirms the importance of freedom, human rights, good governance, the rule of law and effective accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enable inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development.

The United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/327, which was spearheaded by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China, reaffirms that the foundations for sustainable development at all levels include transparent, inclusive, participatory and accountable public institutions and professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public services.

As we transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are universal and highly inter-dependent, governments will need to adopt innovative approaches and develop capacities to promote policy change and integration, institutional coordination, participatory decision-making processes, and effective, responsive, inclusive and accountable service delivery. General Assembly resolution 69/327 encourages the international community to continue to support capacity development in public governance and institution-building at all levels, with a view to accelerating progress towards sustainable development and recognizes the need to promote the exchange of experience related to the role of public administration in the implementation of international agreed development goals.

The United Nations is committed to promoting the exchange of innovative experiences, knowledge and good practices in public governance that contribute to social and economic development while ensuring environmental sustainability. UN-DESA, through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), has organized global events on issues related to good governance, including e-government, in order to provide government officials, as well as regional and international organizations with a platform to exchange ideas, practices and strategies to advance the United Nations development agenda. Moreover, with the emergence of e-government as an enabler of public administration transformation, DPADM has published the United Nations E-Government Survey since 2003, highlighting recent e-government trends and development of countries worldwide.

2.2. Context

As the world assesses progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and looks ahead to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, including the SDGs, the discussion around building effective, accountable and inclusive public administration is receiving ever growing attention. The 2030 Agenda will critically depend on ethical leadership and capable public governance institutions for the promotion of

peaceful and inclusive societies. Capable and accountable State institutions are needed to ensure: (a) rule of law and effective enforcement mechanisms, i.e. a system of fundamental human rights and laws which are guaranteed through appropriate legislation, order and security, and access to justice; (b) quality and equitable access to public services, including education, health, sanitation, housing, social safety nets, water, services for vulnerable groups, services for businesses, among others; (c) enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, fair employment and business opportunities, which are essential to addressing issues of poverty, including ending hunger; (d) social justice through fair taxation systems and social safety nets, and (e) environmental protection, which is essential for our planet's survival and food security, among other things.

Accountable government institutions ensure that decisions taken by public officials are in compliance with laws and regulations, responsive to citizens' needs and subject to oversight. Country experiences have shown that where there is accountability of public institutions, there are better results on the ground in public service delivery, in areas such as education, health care, water and sanitation, as well as women's participation, among others. A number of new mechanisms have been introduced in many countries to ensure that institutions are efficient, responsive to the needs of the people and that civil servants are accountable for the performance of their functions. Ensuring accountability, through appropriate mechanisms, is essential to guarantee that public institutions operate in an efficient, effective and transparent manner. Preventing corruption - which lowers investment, decreases efficiency, acts as an additional tax on business, and negatively affects the political legitimacy of a government – is also essential to ensure that public resources are utilized for development initiatives and to eradicate poverty. In General Assembly resolution 69/327, Member States condemn corruption at all levels and in all its forms, including bribery, as well as the laundering of proceeds of corruption and other forms of economic crime, and expressing concern about the magnitude of corruption at all levels, and in this regard reiterated their commitment to preventing and combating corrupt practices at all levels, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Building trust in government is a first, critical step toward progress in achieving the SDGs; it will depend primarily on implementation of sound public policy that reflects people's priorities, on institutional performance, and on the access to quality public services. Innovation in government is also a powerful tool to transform public administration in support of sustainable development. The capacity to meet performance expectations, perceptions of competence, and a sense of security and reliability of public institutions, should be among the leading concerns in public administration, and underlying objectives of public sector reform. Ethical leadership, a commitment to prevent and fight corruption and a professional, competent civil service of the highest standard of integrity will be part and parcel of the new public sector required to implement the 2030 development agenda.

3. THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

In light of the above, the Symposium will focus on three inter-related thematic areas, which are essential to promoting accountable institutions: (a) ethical leadership, professionalism and culture of integrity in the public sector; (b) policy and institutional coordination and integration: changing the mind-set and changing silo mode of operation; and (c) citizen engagement, participation and mechanisms to hold governments accountable.

3.1. Ethical leadership, professionalism and culture of integrity in the public sector

Session I will focus on how to strengthen ethical leadership in the public sector, as well as professionalism and a culture of integrity. According to a global United Nations survey "MY World" where people were asked to vote for six top priority issues out of 17, having in place an "honest and responsive government was voted as number four right after education, good healthcare and jobs. This means that there are great expectations for governments to be effective, transparent, accountable, and not corrupt. Voters agreed that: "People should have a say on what the government's priorities should be, and confidence that they will implement those priorities competently. Governments should agree and implement standards for making information available to all people on how public money is spent". (http://data.myworld2015.org).

General Assembly resolution 69/327 encourages Member States, observer States and observers to promote effective and accountable leadership, high standards of professionalism, ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness in public institutions and the delivery of public services at all appropriate levels. It also underlines that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration, requiring appropriate institutional frameworks, professional and ethical leadership, a focus on diversity and gender equality, harnessing information and communications technologies, innovation, responsibility and public sector capacity-building (A/RES/69/327, para. 6 and 10). "Accountability means that those who hold office in government act responsibly render account of and are answerable for their acts of commission and omission. Accountability involves the existence of mechanisms to ensure that public officials and political leaders are answerable for their actions and use of public resources, and requires transparent government as well as a free media. Government officials are there to provide services to citizens who have a right to know that public servants are performing well, 'cost effectively, honestly and ethically'. This stems from the core assumption of a democracy, which recognizes that it is the public who, through taxes, is paying for public services."[2] Ethical leadership and high standards of integrity of public officials are paramount to ensuring accountable and responsive institutions, as well as renewed commitment to prevent and fight corruption. There are a number of mechanisms and processes to foster a culture of integrity in public administration, which will be discussed during the meeting.

3.2. Policy and institutional coordination and integration: changing the mind-set and changing silo mode of operation

Session II will focus on how to promote integrated and coordinated approach to policy implementation and service delivery. Sustainable development emphasizes a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach in decision-making at all levels. It rests on integration and a balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals and objectives in both public and private decision-making. It emphasizes intra-generational and intergenerational equity.[3] The implementation of the 2030 development agenda and the SDGs therefore calls for an unprecedented level of policy integration and institutional coordination. As highlighted in the recent session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration, the SDG framework is cross-cutting and integrated in nature and most of the goals and targets require

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[2] UN-DESA/DPADM Report on Human Resources, 2004.
[3] E/2013/69, para. 6

some degree of common effort and cooperation among governmental structures. There is a clear imperative of changing our traditional mind-set and silo-based modes of operation.

Among other things, policy integration for sustainable development will require rethinking of "business-as-usual" practices. Future strategies, programmes and projects must include simultaneously all three dimensions of sustainable development and take account of their inherent complexities and interdependences. Governments must address institutional constraints to policy integration, including overly hierarchical structures, lack of a common strategic policy direction, sectoral self-interest, and a complicated division of labour. These structural challenges can be compounded by inadequate mechanisms for allocating resources for cross-cutting issues and ensuring shared accountability for shared responsibilities.

The need for collaboration with local governments adds a layer of complexity to policy integration in practice. Bringing local governments into the picture of SDG implementation is vital not only to foster coherence and synchronization across levels of administration but also to improve efficiency in service delivery. The active and direct involvement of local governments in SDG implementation will be crucial to progress in the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the SDGs.

3.3. Citizen engagement, participation and mechanisms to hold governments accountable

Session three will explore policies, strategies and innovative practices that allow citizens to hold governments accountable and participate in decision-making processes and service delivery. "Accountability without enforcement cannot work. Enforcing external accountability means the capacity of institutions, external to bureaucracy such as persons exercising political authority, legislators, quasi-judicial and judicial authorities" and citizens, to call public officials to respond for their actions and omissions.[4] Citizen engagement in public decision making processes also ensures increased accountability and responsiveness of government institutions. Bearing in mind national and local specificities, the ability to promote public participation by engaging all groups in society, including the indigenous people, women, youth and older persons, among others, is essential in promoting accountable and responsive institutions; thus building trust in government. In this regard, the General Assembly in its resolution 69/327 calls for renewed efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in public services and to enhance equality in access to services by all, especially persons with disabilities, the elderly, women, youth, children and other disadvantaged groups.

Active and broad citizen engagement, involving all segments of society, is a hallmark of accountable government. For example, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) calls on Governments to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources. General Assembly resolution 69/327 recognizes, in their specific context, the positive contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities, including through some of their traditional values and principles, to strengthening individual and societal commitments in order to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of public administration and promote inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development, including the Andean principles of *ama suwa* (do not be a thief), *ama llulla* (do not be a liar) and *ama qhilla* (do not be lazy), the Inupiat values of *pitqiksiġautainniq* (honesty) and *qiksiksrautiqaġniq* (respect for others) and the Blackfoot

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[4] UNDESA/DPADM Report on Human Resources, 2004

value of *tukuki* (impartiality and incorruptibility), while recognizing that it is a duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms (GA/RES/69/327,para. 11).

The 2030 Agenda also encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive country-led reviews of progress in implementing the SDGs at the national and sub-national levels. It specifies that such reviews should draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities.

In light of the above, Governments need to engage more with indigenous peoples by encouraging participatory processes and by involving them in decision-making and review processes, so as to ensure that institutions and services are responsive to their needs. This will require efforts to remove barriers to participation and build capacity not only among government officials, but also civil society groups.

With the rapid advancements of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), electronic participation has provided new channels for public participation, including online forums, use of social media, government challenges, etc. It is well known that many governments across the globe are opening up their data through open government data initiatives that can help governments enhance transparency and accountability, as well as more effectively participate in decision-making processes and public service design and delivery. Making data available online also improves the efficiency and effectiveness of services by allowing the public to reuse and remix freely available data for any purposes, potentially leading to innovation, new services and thus to economic growth. Readily available data on governments' actions to address poverty eradication, gender inequality, environmental degradation, among others, raises citizens' awareness, and allows for citizen engagement and co-production of services. 46 countries have established dedicated Open Government Portals, according to the UN E-Government Survey 2014. At the same time, 130 countries publish Government expenditures online.

4. OBJECTIVES

The Symposium will provide the opportunity to promote capacity development and exchange knowledge about policies, strategies, innovative practices and lessons learned on how to build an inclusive and responsive public administration to achieve sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a particular focus on the above-mentioned three thematic areas. The United Nations Public Service Awards, and a number of other award programmes, as well as innovative e-government cases contained in the UN E-Government Surveys, have shown that there is great capacity in every region of the world to reinvent government and to launch innovative practices in service delivery. The global and regional flow of ideas, practices and approaches between and within countries has assumed increased importance over time. Disseminating information about innovations in government, through this event and transforming this information into knowledge, is an important contribution to our quest for sustainable development.

5. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Strengthen capacities of national and local governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote an inclusive and accountable public administration able to support progress towards the sustainable development goals;
- Share knowledge about innovative practices on how to promote ethical leadership in public governance; how to foster transparency and access to information, and how to identify suitable mechanisms that allow citizens to hold governments accountable and participate in decision-making and service delivery;
- Foster regional cooperation and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer beyond the event.

6. PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 200 participants are expected to attend the capacity-building workshop, including government officials, representatives of the United Nations, regional development banks, academia and other relevant organizations.

7. DATE AND VENUE

- Date: 16-17 March 2015
- Venue: Cochabamba, Bolivia

8. LANGUAGE

The Symposium will be conducted in English and Spanish.

8. 1 Electronic networking

All the documents of the meeting will be posted on the online United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) at: http://www.unpan.org/

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

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