

## **Building capacities of public institutions for implementing the SDGs: Concrete challenges and potential solutions**

20 July 2016, New York

The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, organized under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council this year, demonstrated once more the centrality of effective and inclusive public administration in development. The same conviction also laid the groundwork for the HLPF Side Event “Building Capacities of Public Institutions for Implementing the SDGs: Concrete Challenges and Potential Solutions” organized in partnership by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 20 July. It included high-level government officials, representatives of the UN system, international development banks and organizations, academia and other stakeholders who discussed specific SDG implementation challenges and capacity gaps, and shared lessons-learned and advice.

Ms. Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator, who delivered the opening remarks, touched the core of the implementation challenges when she said: “Inclusion should be the cornerstone of all capacity strengthening and institution building efforts, encouraging greater stakeholder engagement, participation and ownership in policy processes.” Ministers, Vice-ministers and Deputy Secretaries from various ministries in Germany, Estonia, Somalia and G7+ put the accent on the centrality of *SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* as the catalyst of success for all other SDGs while underscoring the need to interlink and integrate the economic, social and environmental pillars of development in its implementation.

*SDG 13 on Climate Change; SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth* also received due regard by the Member States. Some of the more specific topics of discussion included the ways in which to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and to localize the SDGs while paying utmost attention to the specific needs and challenges of the crisis and post-conflict countries, people’s participation in decision-making, information and communication technologies (ICTs) and gender empowerment.

Efficient and effective data was also at the fore of the discussions. All panellists drew attention to the pressing need to strengthen the capacities of national statistical offices and the related public institutions. The UN System’s support was sought on this specifically, and on the follow up and review of the SDGs, more generally.

“National policy frameworks, subnational development planning, action plans, new institutional approaches all require effective, efficient, inclusive, transparent and accountable public administration. Intelligent and effective implementation requires

mobilizing civil servants and ensuring that they are well equipped to support the implementation of the kind of transformative integrated policies we need, analyse the situation, consult and react to new developments in a pragmatic and ethical way”, said Ms. Marion Barthelemy, Acting Director of DPADM/DESA, who delivered the closing remarks on behalf of Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Social and Economic Affairs, who sent his excuses due to his commitment to the Closing Session of the HLPF .

The event concluded that there is no standard approach for implementing the SDGs. It is for each country to decide on its own path while constantly seeking for effective ways to collaborate and learn from each other’s experiences.