

## **Economic and Social Council**

### **Integration Dialogue 2:**

#### **Building back better towards inclusive, sustainable, and just economies for recovery: Re-designing the contract between people and planet**

**New York, 3 June 2021, 9:00 am**

#### **Talking Points by Ms. Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, Chair of CEPA**

- 1. How can we make sure that recovery strategies and policies are transformative and take into account the integrated nature of the sustainable development goals and provide relief in the short term while creating resilience and promoting sustainability in the long run?**
  - As was mentioned in the context of vaccine inequity, social protection and health systems strengthening, it would be better not to consider recovery from the pandemic as something separate from implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda provides a roadmap to recovery from the pandemic and to building resilience to future shocks.
  - We confirm that the world needs solidarity and cooperation, “not only among the researchers working for competing vaccine developers but also among governments who can and must end” (Jomo Kwame Sundaram, May 18, 2021) the disastrous reality the world is facing due to vaccine inequity.
  - Effective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic require the acceleration of administrative and governance reforms in all countries, in order to increase Governments’ capability to address short- and long-term challenges and improve their resilience to economic, social and environmental shocks.
  - As stated by Prof. Ocampo, there is a need to “reframe the development paradigm ... and not return to a pre-COVID approach to development” similarly there has been a renewed recognition of the importance of governance, public service and public administration. We cannot revert back to the approach of the past forty years which diminished the role of the state, government and public administration. Public administration encompasses public finance and macroeconomics but goes beyond the two. It includes the rule of law, equality of all citizens, the imperative of equity within and between nations as well as international cooperation in meeting the sustainable development goals established by the UN.
  - There is a common tension in public administration between responding to urgent and important global needs and service to the citizens, especially the poor, the voiceless and the marginalized. These tensions also emerge between short term and long-term public needs, the general and the particular. This is especially important because in times of

crisis, governments and leaders tend to concentrate on the short-term and forget about the long-term.

- Achieving sustainable development and strengthening resilience require a long-term perspective in policy making together with institution-building at all levels, based on effective governance for sustainable development, and a steadfast commitment to promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- Each country, whatever the context, needs to do serious work to understand the connections among policy domains and invest in capacities to move towards greater coherence in the longer-term. There are methods for this with support available from international and regional organizations.
- Attention to sound policymaking is key. What does it mean exactly? CEPA has identified the following eight ingredients: (1) strategic planning and foresight; (2) regulatory impact analysis; (3) promotion of coherent policymaking; (4) strengthening of national statistical systems; (5) monitoring and evaluation systems; (6) the science-policy interface; (7) risk management frameworks; and (8) data sharing.
- These are not stand-alone strategies but are connected to one another and joined to the vision of the SDGs. Their strength also lies in their contextualization and incorporation into daily policy decisions and processes.

## **2. How are countries' experiences in dealing with COVID-19 and climate change shaping a new social contract that can help recover better and put countries on track to achieving the SDGs?**

- The initial responses to the pandemic have shown that it is necessary and possible for Governments to play a proactive leading role, breaking the past trend of replacing public institutions with private ones. All over the world, Governments are reinventing themselves in order to be ready for a future in which they will be able to perform collaborative forms of leadership in a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.
- A growing lack of trust in Government can be observed in many countries in the wake of the pandemic. Regaining public trust can be fostered through capable leadership, dedication, empathy and professionalism in the public sector, alongside effectiveness in the delivery of accurate information, inclusiveness and engagement of all stakeholders; and accountability that ensures transparency and integrity.
- Putting the principle of leaving no one behind into action depends on deliberate steps being taken to address exclusion, through practical inclusivity policies that systemically address all segments of society and their respective needs.
- Information is an area in which governments can play an important role. Clear, verified information, backed up by evidence, is the key to overcoming challenges related to fake news and mistrust of government. Fake news undermines trust in the state and

institutions, notably in areas where access to the Internet is limited and there are few opportunities to consider alternative sources of information.

- Policy making should address the multidimensional challenges to sustainable development in a holistic, people centred and planet - friendly manner. The capacity to analyze Climate, Land, Energy and Water System (CLEWS) and such approaches to tackle complex problems. Such an approach is critical for more effective long term actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, addressing biodiversity losses, managing water (world not on track to achieve SDG 6 on water and sanitation) and energy in a sustainable way and addressing planetary crises and COVID-19 challenges.

### **3. How can we strengthen institutional, policy and human resources capacities to harness the potential of data and digital technologies, particularly in developing countries, towards recovery from COVID-19, vaccine equity and accelerating progress towards the SDGs during the Decade of Action and Delivery for sustainable development?**

- Governments could benefit greatly from digitalized services and a strong online presence, acting in a timely fashion and expanding coverage of public services to all groups and geographic areas in the recovery to the pandemic. Advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data, and the capacity to manage and analyze information could help Governments improve their understanding of people's needs.
- There is a real need to provide adequate investment in science and technology training in all countries, particularly in developing countries, to expand access to skills that can boost public sector capacity and productivity and to attract people with those skill sets to the public sector workforce. This is particularly important given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement as well as the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the SDGs.
- Countries should consider addressing public sector workforce capability gaps, notably gaps in digital skills, within the context of human resources and national development strategies. Special attention should be paid to the local level, where the workforce as a whole often lags the national Government in terms of digital skills.
- Addressing capability gaps calls for a comprehensive understanding of the scope of the broader public sector workforce – beyond the traditional civil service role.
- The use of new technologies and the promotion of innovation in the public sector should be accompanied by adequate regulatory frameworks and administrative and security safeguards that can guide Governments and reduce the risk of adverse effects of technology.
- Where there is affordable and reliable access to high-speed Internet, online training holds promise through, for example, the provision of massive open online courses, virtual workshops and other forms of ICT-enabled learning.

- In some countries, the rapid switch to online instruction and working from home in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has made it possible to consider further expansion of learning using ICT-enabled methods. However, as in other areas of public service delivery, digital divides mean that many people, including those working in the public sector, still do not have the technology or skills for distance learning.

**4. How can we leverage the work of the Economic and Social Council as well as its subsidiary machinery to accelerate Member States' efforts towards a sustainable and resilient recovery and in building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, including on financing, technology and innovation matters? How can we improve the division of labour among subsidiary bodies in areas that require further attention and action?**

- Suggest that the ECOSOC system look at questions of integration in the same way that countries do, for example by using the methods and tools described in the strategic guidance note on promotion of integrated policymaking to study interlinkages and levels of policy coherence in priority areas and build capacities for the longer-term.
- In the shorter-term, it can be a matter of taking on board the outcome of the work of ECOSOC and its subsidiarity machinery and creating more opportunities for their participation in meetings and events. These Dialogues in preparation for the Integration Segment set a good example.