

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG)

UNPAN Partners Meeting Report Strengthening the UNPAN as a Network to Accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals

Venue: Conference Room A, UN Secretariat Building

Thursday, 18 April 2024

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.



I. Background

In 1999 the UN General Assembly emphasized the importance of a global information network (A/RES/54/231, para 11) and in 2001 it welcomed the establishment of the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN) as a powerful internet-based network for Member States for the exchange of information and experience in public administration (A/RES/56/213, para 1). UNPAN has over 30 Partner institutions around the world and comprises (a) the physical network of practitioners and experts in public administration who collaborate with DESA/DPIDG on joint

activities and (b) unpan.org, the virtual home of the network for knowledge sharing and one of the most visited platforms of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

The UNPAN is a network that links regional and national institutions devoted to public administration, thereby facilitating information exchange, experience sharing, and training in the area of public sector policy and management.

UNPAN is designed to help countries, especially developing countries, to respond to the challenges that governments face in bridging the digital divide between the 'haves and have-nots' and to achieve their development goals. It consists of institutions in every region of the world. The Partners' expertise in areas such as transforming public sector; good governance; leadership; anti-corruption; innovation for improved service delivery; efficient, effective and ethical public service; information society; smart sustainable cities; human resource management; capacity building, and regional co-operation links closely with the work of UN DESA/DPIDG.

II. Summary of Discussions

The United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) met during the 23rd Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) held at the UN Headquarters in New York. Eleven UNPAN Member institutions took part in the meeting. These were the African Local Government Academy of United Cities and Local Government of Africa (ALGA UCLG Africa), Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA), Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA), Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS-IASIA), Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD), Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG), National Institute of Public Administration (INAP-Mexico), Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration (NISPAcee), South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA), and University of Alabama at Birmingham (USA) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

The meeting was opened by **Mr. Juwang Zhu**, Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) of UN DESA. Mr. Zhu welcomed UNPAN Members and mentioned that it is a pleasure to meet so many UNPAN Members again. He noted that UNPAN has a rich and esteemed history, having been in existence for over 20 years and being mandated by a GA resolution. He highlighted that UNPAN is a one of a kind global network that connects international, regional, subregional and national institutions worldwide working on effective governance and public administration and that the over 30 Member institutions consist of some of the most prominent regional organizations in the fields of governance and public administration. Mr. Zhu stressed that UNPAN is designed to help countries, particularly developing countries and countries in special situations, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, including through fostering effective, accountable and inclusive institutions – in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 -, and strengthening partnerships for the goals – in line with SDG 17. He mentioned that UNPAN facilitates capacity development, including through training and cooperation among UN Member States, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation. Mr. Zhu concluded by noting that he looks forward to Partners' contributions and fruitful discussions on new avenues of collaboration as we have passed the mid-way point to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and gear towards the Summit of the Future in September.

Ms. Adriana Alberti, Chief of the Programme Management and Capacity Development Unit (PMCDU) of DPIDG, joined the director in welcoming the UNPAN Partners to this important meeting to share information on each partner's activities in 2024, and to discuss how synergies can be established to better advance the SDGs.

Ms. Anni Haataja-Beeri, Programme Management Officer at PMCDU/DPIDG/UN DESA, shared updates on the key upcoming activities of DPIDG in 2024. She noted that the SDG 16 High-Level Conference will take place on 6 May at the UN Headquarters in NY. The Conference will assess the progress and challenges related to SDG 16 implementation. It will also highlight the effect that progress on SDG 16 can have on addressing the intersecting crises facing the world currently. From 24 to 6 June, the UN Public Service Forum and Awards 2024 on the theme of Fostering innovation amid global challenges: A public sector perspective will be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea. Around September, the UN E-Government Survey 2024 will be launched. The Survey assesses the e-government development progress in all 193 UN Member States. The 19th Annual Internet Governance Forum on the overall theme of building our multistakeholder digital future will be held from 15-19 December, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ms. Haataja-Beeri concluded by noting that the work of DPIDG addresses, internally and externally, all areas of the Quintet of Change which are the five transformations (namely innovation, data, digital, foresight and behavioural science) needed to achieve a modernized UN system, the UN 2.0, and to accelerate the progress on achieving the SDGs. For example, DPIDG supports the Member States through the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs and the so far 23 Strategy Guidance Notes to implement the Principles of Effective Governance.

Ms. Cristina Rodriguez Acosta, Inter-Regional Adviser at PMCDU/DPIDG/UN DESA, presented the UN DESA Curriculum on Governance for the SDG which contains several training of trainers toolkits covering topics such as changing mindsets in public institutions, transparency, accountability and ethics in public institutions, strengthening institutional arrangements and governance capacities for policy coherence, effective national to local public governance for SDG implementation, government innovation for social inclusion of vulnerable groups and innovation and digital government for public service delivery. The toolkits can be used online as well as for in-person and hybrid trainings. Capacity development activities based on the Curriculum include workshops on changing mindsets for SDG implementation (Bolivia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Pakistan), on innovation and digital transformation (Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, the Caribbean), on strategic foresight (Bangladesh, Pakistan) and on transparency (Malawi). Ms. Rodriguez Acosta

concluded by noting that DPIDG has projects on innovation, digital transformation and changing mindsets with CARICAD/ECLAC.

Mr. Deniz Susar, Public Administration and Governance Officer at the Digital Government Branch (DGB) of DPIDG/ UN DESA presented on the Local Online Service (LOSI) index and how to apply it. The LOSI, part of the UN E-Government Survey, assesses the e-government portals of the most populous city in each country. Mr. Susar highlighted that entities can join the LOSI Network in an effort to respond to the calls expand the LOSI also to the non-most populous cities. The entities can get access to training, the LOSI methodology and database and will prepare a publication, followed by a webinar.

III. Presentation of Key activities in 2024 by UNPAN Members

Mr. Bok Gyo Jeong, Chair of the United States Chapter of AAPA, shared that the AAPA Annual Conference will be held in November in Jakarta, Indonesia. The theme will be how AAPA members can contribute to the SDGs. The Conference is planned to include a session with DPIDG. He noted that the Conference is implemented in partnership with EROPA. The Conference is open to all UNPAN Members.

Dr. Alex Brillantes, Secretary-General of EROPA, noted that the training of trainers on the UN DESA Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs, organized with DPIDG, was a success. He also mentioned the Standards of Excellence for Public Administration Education and Training review process. He also noted EROPA's partnerships with SAMPA. Dr. Brillantes highlighted that EROPA and CLAD signed a Memorandum of Understanding. He concluded by noting the Annual Conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, in November organized jointly with AAPA as well as the EROPA Bulletin.

Mr. David Fulford, Chief Executive Officer of IPAC, highlighted IPAC's work on areas such as improving trust in the public sector, immigrant health, energy transition in Canada, changing mindsets and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to increase productivity, a topic in which IPAC is working together with Microsoft. He also mentioned a new course on ethics and values, in partnership with the York University. He highlighted the importance on soft skills in influencing stakeholders. Mr. Fulford concluded by noting that the IPAC Annual Conference will be held in November in Winnipeg, Canada.

Dr. Sofiane Sahraoui, Director General of IIAS-IASIA, shared that the IIAS Conference will be held in Mombasa in collaboration with the Kenya School of Government. There will be an IASIA Conference in South Africa as well as in Greece in September. He noted that the common theme of these events, as well as several dialogues, is governance solutions. He mentioned a publication series on national systems of public institutions as well as the E-Journal, open governance book series and work on accreditation. Dr. Sahraoui concluded by noting the activities on the Review of the Standards of Excellence with DPIDG.

Mr. Conrado Ramos Larraburu, Secretary-General of CLAD, noted collaboration on the Summit of the Future with regard to what Latin America can do in terms of AI and e-government. He also mentioned best practices and toolkits webpage developed together with IADB. Mr. Ramos Larraburu concluded by noting the CLAD Journal and that the next CLAD Congress will be held in Brasilia, Brazil, in November.

Dr. Fadi Salem, Director of Policy Research Department of MBRSG, mentioned the Masters and Executive programmes in public administration. He highlighted the primary datasets on SDGs in the Arab Region, which will be published in early 2025. These include datasets on 25 countries on all SDGs and all targets. He also noted the publication on economic diversification, launched at the World Government Summit and that the special issue of the Public Leaders Journal on the theme of AI in governance is coming up. Dr. Salem concluded by mentioning a call for papers for a global conference on economic diversification, and AI and governance conference in Thailand in June as well as certification in AI ethics.

Ms. Selene Lucía Vázquez Alatorre, General Secretary of INAP-Mexico, highlighted that 2025 is the 70th anniversary of INAP-Mexico. She also noted that there will be a National Meeting in October.

Mr. Juraj Nemec, NISPAcee Steering Committee member, and the former President of NISPAcee, mentioned the NISPAcee Annual Conference in Georgia as well as the Journal, which is a regional leader.

Dr. Akhique Haque, President of SANPA and Professor of public administration, noted that SANPA is a relatively new organization and has grown quickly. He mentioned SANPA's work on post-COVID development of the SDGs in South East Asia and on SDG 16 in the region. The first Annual Conference of SANPA will be held in October in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Dr. Haque noted that SANPA partners with IOM and Oxfam.

Ms. Najat Zarrouk, Director of ALGA UCLG Africa, noted a meeting in June in Morocco that will bring together African managers from 11 countries. In July, there will be a conference in South Africa on alternative service delivery. She highlighted that a flagship event, the African Forum for territorial managers, will be held in Morocco in October. She also mentioned the work on the Review of Standards of Excellence with DPIDG, with close to 1000 participants and a related Expert Group Meeting in October. Ms. Zarrouk concluded by stressing the importance of promoting content also in languages other than English, an effort in which volunteers or partners could assist.

Mr. Younes Abouyoub, Chief of the Governance and State Building Section, Governance and State Building Division of ESCWA, noted a training in June with UN DESA on fragile conflict impacted countries. A training course will be held in Yemen on corruption and transparency. He also mentioned a public administration modernization project, south-south cooperation and seminars. Mr. Abouyoub concluded by highlighting the online platform on public governance in the region.

IV. UNPAN Website Revamping – Updates on the new platform

Mr. Gregory McGann, Programme Management Assistant at PMCDU/DPIDG/UN DESA shared updates on the new unpan.un.org website. Phase I of the new website development (2020-2021) consisted of launching UNPAN 2.0. Phase II consisted of launching UNPAN 3.0, with a more dynamic and interactive website. Improvements include mobile optimization, ease of upload and a communities of practice feature. During the first four months of 2024 the UNPAN website received a total of 10,500 views and a total of 3,400 users over 5,800 sessions.

Ms. Huiwen Tan, Public Information Assistant at PMCDU/DPIDG/UN DESA highlighted the benefits of UNPAN Partners contributing to the UNPAN website. These include enhancing ownership, promoting Partners' activities, promoting thought leadership and knowledge sharing and creating more regular interactions through a community of practice. She introduced the next steps of contributing to UNPAN as follows; by May 2024 UNPAN Partners should identify technical focal points and communicate selection to the UNPAN Management Team; in June 2024 the UNPAN Management Team will produce a tutorial video on how to contribute to UNPAN and in July 2024 there will be UNPAN technical focal points group training on how to upload information on the upgraded UNPAN website. Ms. Huiwen noted that the UNPAN Management Team will provide ongoing support to the technical focal points as needed.

V. Annexes

Annex 1: Results of the meeting participant survey

A follow-up survey was sent to the participating UNPAN Member institutions. Three UNPAN Member institutions filled the survey as follows.

1. What concrete activities can UNPAN Members undertake jointly to further the implementation of the SDGs in public administration?

- Models for SDG implementation; measurement of SDG implementation.
- Sharing of information and activities among network, e.g., conferences, joint research and publications, names of possible keynote and plenary speakers who we can invite to our international conferences. We have been sending our regular EROPA Bulletin too and we hope UNPAN can help disseminate this and share it with your broader network.
- UNPAN can jointly support a conference or participate in existing conferences. SANPA's inaugural conference will be held on October 25-27, 2024. The theme is "Achieving Sustainable Development in South Asia—Where do we stand?". It will be the largest gathering of South Asian experts discussing SDG implementation plans. We would like at least one or two UNPAN officials to attend the conference. UN IOM and OXFAM Bangladesh are partners of this conference. We would like to have UNPAN become an official partner.

- Workshop hosting, joint training for SDGs and related competencies.
- Knowledge, best practices and tools sharing. Capacity Building. Online and e-learning activities. Organizing joint events.

2. How could UN DESA and UNPAN network support your institutions in accelerating the SDGs including through education and trainings?

- Joint projects.
- The network that UN DESA and UNPAN provide to us members is invaluable. It has become a basis of bilateral exchanges (e.g. MoUs) between and among us. EROPA has recently had an MOU with CLAD, and IASIA may partner with EROPA and AAPA in our upcoming conference in November in Indonesia.
- We would like UNPAN to provide workshops/training targeted at our members in seven countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). The training and toolkits are of immense importance for realizing the SDGs. We also would like to collaborate with UNPAN partners within the network. UNPAN can facilitate such collaboration.
- By organizing regular joint training on SDGs using the toolkits prepared by UN DESA.
- By giving visibility to our efforts and activities. Better design. Offering a global platform.

3. What other suggestions would you have to strengthen the UNPAN network?

- Regular member consultation; allocation of SDG agenda to different members.
- Perhaps, we can have regular (say quarterly or at least twice a year) online meetings so we can update each other. Can UN DESA initiate a comparative and multi-disciplinary study among our countries on a specific topic, say on the serious implications of AI upon our discipline? Another is a possible updated textbook (or at the very least a journal article) for use of public administration schools on the latest trends in the theory and practice of public administration given the many developments in the field (ranging from digital government, to AI to climate change, and the role of the private sector, and impacts of globalization, etc.) Perhaps UNPAN can initiate a study group on these matters.
- The initiatives taken by UNPAN to help host webpages for UNPAN members are commendable. SANPA is a nonprofit organization, and we do not have funding from any institution. The organization is run with the support of members affiliated with universities and government organizations across South Asia. Any help with resources and ideas on sustaining funding is greatly appreciated.
- UNPAN may host its own annual conference, focused on each partners' activities and contributions to SDGs.
- UNPAN may publish issue papers contributed by its member organizations
- Taking into account the cultural diversity. Organizing more events to promote UNPAN. Mobilize more members.

4. Any other comments?

- On behalf of EROPA, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to UN DESA and UNPAN for enabling this very important forum, given the many challenges we are facing today. We are grateful.
- Attending UNPAN's annual gathering at the UN in NY allows much-needed networking and support for SANPA. We request that UNPAN or any affiliated agencies with the UN support one of our executive board member's attendance at the conference. Thank you for all that you do.
- We, AAPA leadership team and members, greatly appreciate UNPAN and UN DESA/DPIDG and their staff members for providing this collaborative platform. Thank you.
- Have Member logos in the banner of the Partners.

Annex 2: Meeting Agenda

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG)

Chair: Ms. Adriana Alberti, Chief, Programme Management & Capacity Development Unit (PMCDU), Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Secretariat Resource Persons: Anni Haataja-Beer, Huiwen Tan and Gregory McGann, PMCDU, DPIDG, UNDESA

1:30 – 1:35 p.m.	Opening Remarks Mr. Juwang Zhu , Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), UN DESA
1:35 – 2:15 p.m. (1 :35 – 1 :40pm min) 33 min Tour de Table (1 :40 – 2 :13 pm) (3 min each)	Session I - Introduction by UNPAN Members of Key Upcoming Activities Objective of the meeting and updates on the UNPAN <i>Adriana Alberti, Chief, PMCDU, UNDESA/DPIDG</i> What are UNPAN Members key upcoming activities in 2024? <i>Tour de table</i> <i>UN DESA DPIDG</i>

<p>(2 :13 – 2 :19 pm) (6 min)</p> <p>2:20 – 2:35 p.m. (15 min)</p> <p>2:35 – 2:40 p.m.</p>	<p>Overview of DPIDG’s activities <i>Anni Haataja, Programme management officer (2 min)</i> <i>Cristina Alicia Rodriguez-Acosta, inter-regional adviser (2 min)</i> <i>Deniz Susar, Governance and public administration officer (2 min)</i></p> <p><i>CAFRAD, AAPA, EROPA, IPAC, IIAS-IASIA, CLAD, MBRSG, INAP-Mexico, NISPAcee, SANPA, ESCWA, UCLG-ALGA</i></p> <p>Session II – Strengthening Synergies and New Ways of Working Together: Follow-up Actions</p> <p>Facilitated by Adriana Alberti, Chief, PMCDU, UNDESA/DPIDG</p> <p>Open discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What concrete activities can UNPAN Members undertake jointly to further the implementation of the SDGs in public administration? 2. How could UN DESA and UNPAN network support your institutions in accelerating the SDGs including through education and trainings? <p>Session III - UNPAN Website Updates and Q&A</p> <p>Huiwen Tan and Gregory McGann, PMCDU, DPIDG, UNDESA</p> <p>Roadmap and Timeline for Members to Contribute to UNPAN</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNPAN Members identify technical focal points and communicate it to the UNPAN Management Team, 1 May 2024 2. UNPAN Management Team to produce a tutorial video on how to contribute to UNPAN, 1 June 2024 3. Schedule UNPAN technical focal points group training for any questions on how to upload information on the upgraded UNPAN, 2nd week of June 4. UNPAN Management Team will provide support to focal points as needed, ongoing.
<p>2:40 – 2:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Closing Session</p> <p>Follow-Up Actions and the Way Forward</p> <p>Mr. Juwang Zhu, Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG), UN DESA</p>

Annex 3: List of Participants

#	Organization	Title	Salutation	First name	Last name	Country
UNPAN Partners						
1.	African Local Government Academy of United Cities and Local Government of Africa (ALGA UCLG Africa)	Director	Ms.	Najat	Zarrouk	Morocco
2.	Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA)	Chair, United States Chapter	Mr.	Bok Gyo	Jeong	USA
3.	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA)	Secretary-General	Dr.	Alex	Brillantes Jr	Philippines
4.	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA)	Deputy Secretary General for Research and Publications	Dr.	Kristoffer	Berse	Philippines
5.	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA)	Senior Researcher and Office Manager	Ms.	Ainna Shariz E.	Comia	Philippines
6.	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA)	Senior Administrative Specialist	Ms.	Katherine B.	Edem	Philippines
7.	Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC)	Chief Executive Officer	Mr.	David	Fulford	Canada
8.	International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS-IASIA)	Director General	Dr.	Sofiane	Sahraoui	Belgium

9.	Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD)	Secretary-General	Mr.	Conrado	Ramos Larraburu	Venezuela
10.	Latin American Center for Development Administration (CLAD)	Director of International Affairs	Dr.	Alexander	López Ramirez	Venezuela
11.	Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG)	Director of Policy Research Department	Dr.	Fadi	Salem	UAE
12.	National Institute of Public Administration (INAP-Mexico)	General Secretary	Ms.	Selene Lucía	Vázquez Alatorre	Mexico
13.	Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration (NISPAcee)	NISPAcee Steering Committee member, and the former President of NISPAcee	Mr.	Juraj	Nemec	Slovakia
14.	South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA) and University of Alabama at Birmingham (USA)	President and Professor of Public Administration	Dr.	Akhlique	Haque	USA
15.	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	Chief, Governance and State Building Section, Governance and State-Building Division	Mr.	Younes	Abouyoub	Lebanon