

Webinar 3 on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions

Wednesday, 19 June 2024

Background

“Corruption is the ultimate betrayal of public trust”

Secretary-General António Guterres¹

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be realized without transparent, accountable and ethical public institutions. Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda highlights the need to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms (Target 16.5). The Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2018, also emphasize the need for accountability, integrity, transparency and independent oversight.

Corruption undermines in many different ways governments’ ability to provide effective, inclusive and accountable services, particularly to the vulnerable groups. It has a negative impact on government’s ability to serve the public interest and erodes people’s trust in public institutions. For instance, in a survey of 35,777 people to commemorate the United Nation’s 75th Anniversary, 68 percent stated that things about government corruption will not get better by 2045². It also results in loss of resources, which are essential to address the needs of those left behind. Curbing corruption could deliver an additional \$1 trillion in tax revenues annually across the world, or 1,25 percent of global gross domestic product³. This loss has negative impacts on peace, stability, security, the rule of law, gender equality, the environment and human rights, and is thus detrimental to the achievement of the SDGs. In particular, the devastating consequences of corruption bear on the poor, marginalized and people in vulnerable situations, and some types of corruption, including petty corruption, can disadvantage women disproportionately. Furthermore, corruption can be even more damaging in times of crisis, such as conflicts and pandemics.

UN DESA is committed to supporting Member States in developing their capacities to curb corruption, including through capacity development activities, the [Toolkit on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions](#), part of the UN DESA [Curriculum on Governance for](#)

¹ United Nations (October 15, 2020). Corruption is the ultimate betrayal of public trust. Statement by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on corruption in the context of COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/statement-corruption-context-covid-19> (last accessed on January 22, 2020).

² United Nations (September 2020). The Future We Want. The United Nations We Need. Update on the Work of the Office on the Commemoration of the UN’s 75th Anniversary, p. 67. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un75report_september_final_english.pdf

³ International Monetary Fund (April 2019). Fiscal Monitor: Curbing Corruption. Chapter 2 (pp. 39-66), p. 43. Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/fiscal-monitor/2019/April/English/ch2.ashx>



[the SDGs](#), and the [online training course on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions – Understanding and Assessing Corruption](#).

Against this backdrop, this webinar will examine integrity and effective anti-corruption in public institutions through three interlinking factors:

1. Transparency of government, which enables people and civil society to hold governments to account.
2. Accountability, which can be enhanced by strengthening oversight institutions and involving stakeholders in decision-making.
3. Transforming mindsets of public servants to adopt ethical standards, who as change agents play an enabling role in integrity transformations, upholding effective governance and anti-corruption measures in support of sustainable development.

The webinar will highlight some key insights on how to foster and promote transparency, accountability and ethics in public institutions. Challenges, opportunities and good practices will also be examined.

Objectives

To explore the importance of building transparent, accountable and inclusive institutions to foster effective governance, prevent corruption and gain public trust.

To explore the relationship between transparent, accountable and ethics in public institutions and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To better understand the public sector skills and mindsets required for promoting transparency, accountability and ethics in the public sector.

Guiding questions

1. What are some of the good practices to promote transparency, accountability and ethics in the public sector? What type of strategies have been successful?
2. What are some of the ways that transparent and accountable public institutions and ethical public servants have advanced the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs? What are some of the ways in which corruption have hampered the progress?
3. What are some of the key skills and mindsets required from public servants to uphold and promote transparency, accountability and ethics in the public sector?

