



THE BARCELONA DECLARATION ON “THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE IN ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS”

**Barcelona, Spain
21 – 23 June 2010**

PREAMBLE:

1. The 2010 United Nations Public Service Day, Awards Ceremony and Forum on " The Critical Role Of Public Service In Achieving The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)", organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Government of Catalonia, Spain, brought together ministers, senior government officials at the national and local levels, experts, academia and international organisations to exchange good practices, innovations, and strategies to improve governance and public administration to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. During the Forum, distinguished speakers presented their experiences and perspectives during three capacity development workshops and an expert group meeting on the respective themes: a) Promoting Transparency, Accountability and Innovation in Public Service Delivery for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals; b) Engaging Citizens in Development Management and Public Governance for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, c) Advancing E-Government and Knowledge Management, and d) Developing Institutional Capacities of Public Administration. They also had the opportunity to formulate concrete recommendations on how to build the capacity of public administration to achieve the MDGs in the above-mentioned thematic areas.

2. The participants of this meeting, held in Barcelona, Spain, from 21 to 23 June 2010 convey their gratitude to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations and to the Directorate General of Participation of the Government of Catalonia, Spain, for the successful preparation of this event. Furthermore, participants appreciate the opportunity of taking part in such a rich exchange of diverse experiences.

3. Cognizant of the fact that, due to the multiple crises affecting all societies around the world, there is growing distrust in government institutions while at the same time there is an increase of citizens' demands for more equitable, effective, participatory and citizen-centric services and for greater participation in policy-making processes;

4. Recognizing that public administration reforms should not only aim at making governments more efficient and effective, but should also improve the quality of participation of

citizens in public policy-making, as part of gradually evolving democratic practices and institutions;

5. Recognizing that public decision-making processes should be transparent, accountable and participatory and that information about government decisions in public affairs for development should be clear and accessible to all;

6. Acknowledging the fundamental role of citizens' engagement in policy-decision making in all stages, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, especially at the local level through decentralization and multi-level governance, to foster socio-economic progress and to promote more effective participation in public affairs and service delivery, as well as a stronger feeling of co-responsibility;

7. Acknowledging the vital importance of building effective participatory governance mechanisms, including consultation on development priorities and policies, deliberation on courses of action, collaborative planning, innovation in public interventions and processes, participatory budgeting processes, local common development funds, social auditing, among others, for achieving the MDGs;

8. Taking stock of the critical role that e-Government plays in enabling governments to respond on a continuous basis to the many demands of their citizens and to raise the profile of public administration in general;

9. Recognizing that today innovation is present in the agenda of public administration reforms throughout the world and that several countries in the region have given top priority to innovation in government, which is reflected in the increasing number of innovative practices that have won the prestigious United Nations Public Service Awards;

10. Acknowledging with appreciation the positive outcomes of the previous United Nations Public Service Days and Awards Ceremonies held since 2003;

11. Acknowledging with appreciation the development by UNDESA of the UN-Public Administration Knowledge Space (UN-PAKS) which should be promoted to support Member States as an online platform in the areas of e-Government, preparedness and post crisis reconstruction, institutional strengthening, citizens' engagement in development management and public governance;

12. The participants of the 2010 United Nations Public Service Day, Awards Ceremony and Forum on "The Critical Role of Public Service in Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" draw attention to this Declaration with the following recommendations;

- a. Development needs to be fostered by all stakeholders and governments shall promote the engagement of the people, organized civil society and private sector actors to jointly achieve better living conditions for all, sustainability, inclusion and equity, with special attention to the development needs of women, poor and marginalized groups and future generations;

- b. Citizens' engagement has to be considered to accelerate the progress towards reaching the MDGs in the years ahead, together with increasing investment resources, partnerships among international and domestic stakeholders and enhanced and innovating public administration;
- c. Accountability needs to be emphasized in order to consolidate trust and make citizens' engagement a useful and creditworthy process. Knowledge sharing and the exchanges of good practices must be promoted to facilitate the efficient dissemination of practices, methodologies, institutions and mechanisms on citizens' engagement that countries may adapt to their specific context. The United Nations can well assist Member States by offering tools such as guidelines, training courses, ICT-based tools and other, to national and local governments, as well as to civil society organizations;
- d. Governments and public administration leaders should address social problems, vulnerability issues, and potential conflicts before they occur. Supporting public administration to work with citizens and development partners to address vulnerability should be given priority. Achieving the MDGs is one of the ways of minimizing discontent, conflict and violence;
- e. As public administration institutions are instrumental in preparedness, relief, mitigation and reconstruction, strengthening public administration capacities should be given more priority than is the case currently and capacity building should always be central to post disaster/conflict/crisis activities, including humanitarian work.
- f. Interconnected warning systems comprising of centers of crisis management and response should be established at the national, regional, and global levels. At national level, mandatory funds should be included in national budgets to enable public administration to handle emergency and disaster, as well as disaster preparedness should be mainstreamed in all sectors, policies, strategies, activities, programs, and funding budgets of public administration. Public administration should create linkages with relevant stakeholders, particularly universities, to collaborate in the work of preparedness for disaster/crisis/conflict, as well as post disaster/crisis/conflict reconstruction.
- g. To improve transparency and accountability, governments should promote wider use of information, communication and technology to simplify and reduce the cost of processes and foster broader access. Information sharing and using ICT tools should be a priority to support planning.
- h. In addition, governments should develop and strengthen the enforcement of legal standards and measures, including, through training, codes of conduct, declaration of assets, peer to peer knowledge transfer, independent evaluation including customer satisfaction, simplification of bureaucracy, and support civic engagement, as well as empowerment of people by knowledge sharing.
- i. UNDESA, in collaboration with Member States, should develop a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the process of adaptation and dissemination of successful initiatives and create an enabling environment for the systematization of innovations in the delivery of public services.
- j. Governments should focus and promote e-Government development that is citizen-centric and focused on the needs of people, not only on technology. UNDESA, in collaboration with Member States, should promote the vision that e-

Government development is not a managerial option of public sector administrations but a duty of the State. Likewise, access to e-Government should be promoted as a right of citizens and not just an additional service.

- k. UNDESA should continue to issue the UN e-Government Survey every two years as a useful tool to benchmark e-Government development and knowledge management.